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PERIODICALS DEPARTMENT

EDITORIAL

NO NEW NUKES IS GOOD NEWS

The Supreme Court's affirmation of California's ban on nuclear plant construction pending the development of a system for storing spent fuel strikes at the heart of the nuclear industry's viability. The giant utilities and the corporate merchants of nuclear equipment need new plants to remain solvent at a time when the entire energy system is suffering severe stress. Rising costs, falling consumption, nonpaying customers, appealing alternative energy sources and deepening technical problems have combined to make the industry extremely vulnerable to political pressures. At present, seven other states have construction bans similar to California's, and twenty-three more have comparable legislation pending. Antinuclear states could disrupt the system and bankrupt utilities and their suppliers.

The political implications of the decision are far-reaching. Local groups opposed to nuclear power have been given a potentially powerful weapon—state law. The Court held that the Federal Atomic Energy Act of 1954 does not pre-empt state action aimed at "economic problems" in the areas the law covers. The ruling might be extended to cover economically motivated laws on evacuation procedures, the transportation of nuclear materials and on-site waste storage—indeed, every conceivable issue of nuclear safety. Nor is it beyond the realm of possibility that subdivisions of a state—towns and counties—could win the right to impose their own restrictions on nuclear operations.

The Court's ruling will surely encourage the no-nukes movement to press its protests across the country. For it has been the radical extension of the decision-making process that has placed the nuclear establishment in its present precarious state. The Court has now confirmed the right of a democratic opposition to reverse the dangerous decisions of an expert elite.

MURDER AT THE S.I.
Barbara Ehrenreich

THE WARSAW UPRISING
Daniel Lazare

NONALIGNED ISN'T NEUTRAL
Michael Manley

WRITERS' UNION
James Ridgeway

THE C.I.O. IN WORLD WAR II
Maurice Isserman

NATION 'DISCOVERY' WINNERS

ELECTRONIC SNOOPING

TALES OF A COMPUTER STATE

DAVID BURNHAM

Under the hood of the 1981 V8-6-4 Cadillac motorcar, the General Motors Corporation buried a small but sophisticated computer. "Your Cadillac," the owner's manual boasted, "is equipped with a digital fuel injection system which monitors the exhaust stream with an oxygen sensor. The oxygen sensor signals the control unit to adjust the air-fuel ratio as necessary."

The manual further noted that the "Check Engine" light on the instrument panel "is designed to warn you if the system has detected any faults. If the light comes on and stays on while driving, the car should be taken to a Cadillac dealer as soon as possible for system inspection and maintenance. If the light comes on and goes off, it is an indication that a temporary problem has cleared itself. While it is not as critical that the vehicle be brought in to a dealer for inspection immediately, the dealer may at a later date be able to determine what trouble had occurred and if any maintenance is necessary."

But *Electronics Engineering News*, a trade publication, discerned another possible use for the tiny electronic spy: a way to deny Cadillac owners the benefits of their warranties if they have failed to drive according to G.M. standards.

"Any suggestion that there is any equipment in our cars designed to spy on a driver is pure hogwash," said a Cadillac spokesman. "The computer is just to help mechanics repair cars, and the information it provides is used for that purpose only."

The on-board Cadillac computer affects only a handful of people. But it is a symbol of the

(*Continued on Page 537*)

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LETTERS.

TALES OF AN EX-'DIGEST' STAFFER

Bronx, N.Y.

Having worked for a year (until May 1982) as a researcher for *Reader's Digest*, I was intrigued by Andrew Kopkind's "The Return of Cold War Liberalism" [*The Nation*, April 23]. While I agree with him in general, I believe he has underestimated the vast distance between the traditional cold war hawkishness of people like Paul Nitze and Eugene Rostow and what has been described in *The Nation* by Frank Donner as a smear movement ["The Campaign to Smear the Nuclear Freeze Movement," Nov. 6, 1982].

When I went to work for the *Digest*, I was surprised that its conservatism was not as strident as I had expected. I was even more surprised by articles praising an ex-Klansman who became a civil rights worker, denouncing censorship of books in schools and pointing out improvements in racial attitudes in the South. There were, of course, the usual calls for more military hardware and denunciations of communists everywhere, but these are not startlingly new conservative positions.

It seems to me that this muted right-wingedness was entirely abandoned at the *Digest* (I cannot speak for other publications) with its first salvo against the freeze movement, in June 1982, when Frank Chapple charged that the European movement was under the direction of the K.G.B. *Nation* readers are familiar with what followed: John Barron's pieces and the articles on the plot against the Pope, the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches. Knowing *Digest* research practices, it is easy for me to believe that while some of the facts in the articles may in themselves be accurate, they have been strung together in such a fashion as to create a distorted picture. The false statement about Terry Provance only underscores the fact that the *Digest* does not check its facts if it does not wish to do so.

I realize that the *Digest* has printed articles of this sort in the past, particularly about the church groups. What we now need to know is why there was this hiatus and why it has again decided to come out swinging.

Susan Hendrickson

COLD WAR LIBERALISM

White Plains, N.Y.

Congratulations on Andrew Kopkind's splendid piece on the cold war liberals and their attempt to ward off attacks from conservatives by denouncing everybody left of center as "tender-minded" and "Stalinist." Tender-minded is what civilized people are *supposed* to be. They are supposed to transcend the purlieus of self, and feel concern and responsibility for others.

As for the Medusa's-head epithet of "Stalinism," the Russian dictator has been dead for thirty-two years, and he was not one of our boys in the first place. To describe any action more meliorative than giving up your seat on the bus to an old lady as "Stalinist" is a craven currying of favor from quarters that should be challenged, not courted.

The motto of these presumed liberals whom Kopkind is describing would seem to be that well-known counsel of prudence, "Let's you and George fight."

Margaret Halsey

SOVIETOPHOBIA'S FUNCTION

New York City

In his April 9 "Sovieticus" [*The Nation*], Stephen F. Cohen cited several reasons for the U.S. government's Sovietophobia. He omitted perhaps the most compelling one: its role as a cover for lawless foreign interventions by the United States. The technique was developed by John Foster Dulles in 1953 and 1954 to prevent any indigenous loosening of the United States' corporate economic and political grip on Latin America, specifically on Guatemala. It is evidently being followed with studied fidelity by the Reagan Administration in Nicaragua.

Those of us who were sensitive at the time to the tenacious conspiracy against the democratic, reform-minded, bourgeois Jacobo Arbenz government may recall the numerous thunderbolts Dulles hurled at that regime, characterizing it as Moscow's first hemispheric "toehold." But the theme did not originate with him. His drive was coordinated with that of the United Fruit Company, his client in contract negotiations with the Jorge Ubico dictatorship in Guatemala in the mid-1930s. Neither the contract nor United Fruit, the major landowner and employer in Guatemala, had much of a future under Arbenz's land reform, economic development and labor programs.

Thus Thomas McCann, a vice president at United Fruit whose assignment was the anti-Arbenz propaganda drive, tells us in his 1976 book, *An American Company: The Tragedy of United Fruit*, that before Dulles became Secretary of State, in January 1953, the company's public relations department "had only one task: to get out the word that a Communist beachhead had been established in our hemisphere." The message was fleshed out by Spruille Braden, a former Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America, who heralded the anti-Arbenz drive, soon after the Eisenhower inauguration, with a widely publicized speech that argued for a direct American assault. Its theme, which was picked up by Dulles, was that since Soviet Communism was international and Arbenz was its creature, the destruction of the Arbenz regime by the United States would not be intervention in Guatemala's internal affairs. In a telephone interview years later, Braden confirmed to me that he had then been a "consultant" for United Fruit.

Thus was fashioned the "legal" and ideological weapon for intervention: as a Soviet beachhead, Guatemala was open to legitimate assault. Recently declassified State Department files reveal that Dulles admitted to some Latin American diplomats that he had no evidence of a Moscow-Arbenz tie, and no tie has ever come to light. But Dulles knew that "a conviction that such a tie must exist" was necessary to bar a Moscow puppet state in the hemisphere.

The Arbenz regime was not destroyed by a C.I.A.-directed invasion of exiles, as myth has it; the troops never got beyond a few miles of the Honduran border. It was destroyed by a purely C.I.A.-organized effort involving U.S. military planes flown from Honduras and Guatemala, piloted by ex-Marine mercenaries who were recruited by the agency and reportedly paid by United Fruit. Lacking an effective air force, Guatemala was helpless against the bombings and strafings of its capital and villages. Confronted by U.S. Ambassador John Peurifoy's threats of expanded bombings, Arbenz's military officers compelled him to resign. A Peurifoy-dictated succession destroyed a decade of democratic reforms and drove the people back into untold oppression and poverty.

Washington's brutal, direct assault differed in scale and form from Moscow's 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, but not in substance. Moscow's "C.I.A. plot" charges in Prague were the mirror image of Dulles's "Soviet toehold" charges in Guatemala. Since Washington makes a great pretense of morality and U.N. principle, however, "Sovietophobia" has an essential role to play.

Max Gordon

WHERE TO FIND WARNER

Chicago

Richard Howard's review of Sylvia Townsend Warner's letters and poems in the March 19 *Nation* ["The Wise Woman of Dorset"] comments on her lack of academic recognition. Perhaps he'd like to know that at least one of her novels has been reprinted recently by Academy Chicago, which specializes in feminist literature and seems to aim primarily at the academic market. *Mr. Fortune's Maggot* hardly fits that category, but *Lolly Willowes* is available from Academy.

Helen Bugbee

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double-spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Longer letters may be edited for reasons of space. Our policy is to publish as many letters as space permits, but inevitably a backlog develops, so bear with us.

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EDITORIALS.

Ron the Waffler

President Reagan may be the most argumentative executive of American foreign policy in this century, but he is hardly the most decisive. He reads his lines of invective—against the evil of the Russians, the treachery of the radical Arabs, the mischief of the Sandinists—with all the conviction an actor brings to a familiar script. But his rhetorical flourishes belie a curious caution in putting his preachments into practice. At the least, his indecision gets him into embarrassing trouble. At the most, it may save us all from war, or worse.

The Reagan style in foreign policy is maximum fanfare followed by maximum procrastination, and it is nowhere more evident than in his hapless promotion of a plan to bring Israel, the P.L.O. and Jordan into peace negotiations. The plan required the P.L.O. to cede King Hussein the right to represent the Palestinians in bargaining with the Israelis over the future of the West Bank and Gaza, which would become autonomous "entities" federated with Jordan. Opposition to the plan was widespread: from Israel, from Syria, from the left wing of the P.L.O. and from many American Jewish leaders. Hussein had doubts about it himself, although he agreed to give it a try.

According to Karen Elliott House's fascinating articles in

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The Wall Street Journal about Hussein's adventures, the King extracted one necessary promise from Reagan as a precondition to a deal with the P.L.O. It was that the United States would pressure Israel to withdraw its troops from Lebanon and decelerate its colonization of the West Bank. Hussein told Reagan he was worried about the President's own political pressures from "the Jewish vote" in a preelection year (a concern first raised with the King by the Soviet envoy to Amman, Oleg Grenevsky). Reagan apparently told Hussein not to worry; he could win in 1984 "without that bloc," as House phrased it.

It is hard to believe that Reagan could not have put his pressure where his mouth was and achieved at least a token concession from Israel—a mere statement from the Begin government that it would agree to a timetable for withdrawal from Lebanon, or a slight pause in the announcement of new settlements. One can imagine the telephone call from Washington to Jerusalem: "Give an inch, or else." Of all the parties in the Middle East muddle, only Israel is dependent on American aid and vulnerable to American pressure. "Or else" carries a massive threat. Perhaps an Israeli concession would not have made the bargain work; but without it, neither Hussein nor the P.L.O. could have withstood opposition or overcome their misgivings.

But Reagan did not deliver on his promise. Begin did not give his inch. He reaffirmed Israel's intention to keep its soldiers in Lebanon until all other foreign troops leave. And in an ultimate humiliation to Reagan, he announced his own plan for the West Bank—twenty-three new settlements in the next year.

Reagan's failure of will in the Middle East was an embarrassment to his Administration (it reportedly led to the resignation of the White House adviser on Jewish affairs), and it left undisturbed the intractable status quo in the region. In Central America, however, his indecisiveness is cause for some optimism. The C.I.A.'s messy little covert war waged by right-wing Nicaraguan rebels seems to be unwinnable at the front while highly provocative in the United States. Reagan has exaggerated the menace of Russian-Cuban-Sandinist power in the Caribbean, but he is unwilling to pursue the fight he has picked. Instead, he is faced with mounting opposition to intervention from the press, the public and the political establishment. Paralysis seems the likely consequence.

Reagan has railed against Russia with the anger of a religious fanatic, but he has failed to move against the enemy. He actually reversed or abandoned many of the strictures imposed by President Carter after the invasion of Afghanistan, and has more or less let Poland be Poland according to the Soviet definition. The Administration is poking around Southeast Asia (C.I.A. chief William Casey met secretly this month in Manila with former South Vietnamese Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky), and it may be encouraging China in its border battles with Vietnam. Otherwise, Reagan talks about yellow rain and M.I.A.s, but it is all talk.

The crucial test for Reagan's foreign policy is shaping up in Western Europe around the introduction of Pershing 2 and cruise missiles in December. From all he has said, Reagan intends to go ahead with his missile plans despite the opposition to them. Washington insiders assume that the weapons will go on schedule.

But the Reagan style of procrastination suggests something else. The fight over installation may be so strong that Reagan will shrink from it. He is, after all, the inheritor of the isolationist tradition in the Republican Party, a descendant of Robert Taft rather than Dwight Eisenhower. The isolationists got bad press in the years after World War II, when the virtues of internationalism seemed self-evident. But perhaps isolationism is the best we can hope for now, and Reagan's weakness is a small blessing in disguise.

Murder at the S.I.

The news from Albufeira, Portugal, the week before last was the assassination of P.L.O. envoy Dr. Issam Sartawi, a man who was internationally respected for his peacemaking efforts. The setting for the assassination, a meeting of the congress of the Socialist International, was incidental. If Dr. Sartawi's murderers were sending a message—and murder is one of the most emphatic and reliable forms of international communication—it was a message to Yasir Arafat, in Jordan, and not to the socialist party leaders assembled a few hundred yards from the site of the shooting. Yet for those of us who attended the conference, it was Dr. Sartawi's death Sunday morning, far more than S.I. president Willy Brandt's closing remarks a few hours later, that signaled the end of the proceedings, as if the most concrete outcome of four days of deliberations and speechmaking, all carefully recorded in four languages, was the pool of blood on the stone floor of the hotel lobby.

A gathering of the Socialist International is, to say the least, an incongruous occasion for murder. Although directly descended from Karl Marx's first International, the S.I. today is a gentlemanly outfit which comports itself like a miniature United Nations, minus the superpowers. The delegates, almost to a man, wear suits and ties; the women are few and far between. And the formal sessions are tediously polite, in keeping with Brandt's obsession with consensus. Despite the presence in the same hall of Israeli Labor Party representatives and Lebanese socialists, Greek Cypriot leader Vassos Lyssarides and former Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit, not to mention a few other matched sets of potential combatants, there were no boos, no shouted interruptions, no deviations from parliamentary standards of restraint. In content, too, the talk was fairly tame. There was none of the old Marxist zest for crisis; in fact, the European speakers—many of them past, present or soon-to-be heads of state—evinced a definite horror of "instability" and "tension." Portugal's Mário Soares identified "the world crisis" as "what we are all struggling against," and Brandt expressed the fear that Europe's economic difficulties could lead to "irrational reactions."

The issue that repeatedly threatened consensus, and brought the congress closest to open debate, was that of the

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world's maximum irrationality: the arms race. In the past, the S.I.'s stance has been sufficiently pacific to raise the suspicions of the Heritage Foundation, which, in a report dated October 1981, accused the S.I. of carrying out the work of the Soviet Communist Party by "contribut[ing] significantly to the erosion of the political will in western Europe for military deterrence." State Department observers at the Albufeira congress were no doubt pleased by the renewal of the will-to-deter among the French delegation. Electoral victory has swung French Socialists to the right on a number of issues, but I was surprised by the unblushing vehemence with which their representatives at the congress went after every hint of "neutralism" or "imbalance" in the disarmament discussions. The Scandinavian, West German, British and Dutch delegates put up some resistance, but the neo-Gaullists—backed by the Portuguese socialists and representatives of the two Italian socialist parties—prevailed, so that the final resolution on disarmament had all the punch of a UNICEF Christmas card.

The meaning of this near debate, either for the S.I. or for the world outside Albufeira, was less than clear. For one thing, the congress did pass a multi-issue resolution that includes a call for a nuclear freeze; now the S.I. is, on record, at least as anxious about Armageddon as 171 Vermont town meetings. Regardless of what was passed, parties like the West German Social Democrats and the British Labor Party will continue to heed their local peace movements, and the French will continue to manufacture their socialist bombs. As a longtime S.I.-watcher explained to me, the organization does not take itself entirely seriously: it serves in part as a fraternity, where great men can keep in touch throughout the vicissitudes of their political careers, and in part as a "sandbox," where they can rehearse for that far larger sandbox, the United Nations.

But men like Dr. Sartawi—representatives of impoverished and embattled peoples—*do* take the S.I. seriously, and it is their presence, in steadily growing numbers, that may eventually transform the organization into something more worthy of its founder's memory. Under Brandt's leadership, the S.I. has vigorously recruited Third World parties such as El Salvador's National Revolutionary Movement, Grenada's New Jewel Movement and Chile's exiled Radical Party, and it has attracted as "observers" a roster of movements including East Timor's Fretilin, both Eritrean liberation fronts, Morocco's Polisario Front and the Sandinists.

The newcomers are, of course, expected to internalize the merits of democratic socialism over Marxism-Leninism, but they do not travel from all ends of the southern hemisphere just for the free political education. For many Third World movements, the S.I. is one of the only available forums in which to state their cases and lobby for support—moral, financial and political. Fretilin's delegates lobbied strenuously to get a few words about East Timor included in a resolution. The Sandinists were intent on exposing U.S. sponsorship of the invasion of Nicaragua. An African delegate told me that he attended the congress "to meet people," and for representatives of countries that are squeezed by debt, stalked by hunger and ultimately mocked by the big powers' race to omnicide, that is no trivial mission.

Issam Sartawi had come in the hope of having a few minutes at the podium to plead for S.I. recognition of the P.L.O. For some ostensibly bureaucratic reason, but more likely for fear of a walkout by Shimon Peres and his Israeli delegation, he was told that he could not speak. It is a measure of the importance Dr. Sartawi attached to the S.I. that his aide and a few supporters spent hours circulating a petition to reverse that decision. Where the petition failed, his death succeeded: on Sunday morning, Brandt allowed a three-page statement, prepared by Dr. Sartawi the day before, to be read aloud. It contained, in addition to a plea for P.L.O. recognition, strong praise for the S.I.: "The persecuted and underprivileged peoples of Africa, Central and South America and even Asia [have] turned to the S.I. for help, and found in it refuge and succor." That is a good enough reason for the frustrating and often ambiguous project of socialist internationalism to continue. In a world where violence and the threat of megaviolence are accepted forms of discourse, every little bit helps.

BARBARA EHRENREICH

Barbara Ehrenreich, a vice chair of the Democratic Socialists of America, attended the S.I. congress with its delegation. She is author of The Hearts of Men *(Anchor Press).*

Chicago Lessons

In the aftermath of the April 12 Chicago mayoral race, evidence is emerging that Harold Washington's victory reflected a significant change in the Second City's political structure.

First, there was the impressive—and unexpected—support given Washington by Hispanic voters. Although early press reports suggested that Latinos were evenly split between Washington and Republican Bernard Epton, an exit poll conducted by The MidWest Voter Registration Project showed that Washington took almost 80 percent of this vote. Chicago's Hispanic community (composed largely of Puerto Ricans, Mexicans and Cubans) is small, but the 51,000 votes it cast for Washington exceeded his margin of victory. The lesson is clear: in cities with much larger Hispanic populations, blacks can join with Latinos in winning coalitions.

Second, Washington did better among whites than many analysts had predicted. His 18 percent share of the white vote was higher than that received by any Northern black mayor in a first election, save Carl Stokes in Cleveland in 1967.

Finally, the rock-steady black vote came in at a phenomenal 99 percent in many wards, indicating unity across class and economic lines, and the birth—or rebirth—of a mass movement that is an essential building block of new progressive political coalitions.

RAUL HINOJOSA-OJEDA

Raul Hinojosa-Ojeda was Latino research coordinator for Harold Washington's campaign.

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

"The Pope is still fornicating with the Emperor." Thus Dante, in one of his cautionary lines. Roman Catholics assert, quite properly if not very consistently, that the mission of their church is spiritual and not political. The recent dilution of the statement on nuclear war by American Catholic bishops, who started out doubting deterrence and questioning extermination and ended up half embracing them, was largely achieved by the direct intervention of the Reagan Administration. This horrid Dantesque coupling makes a depressing read, as I will show. But there is a tincture of consolation in it. From now on, whenever the Administration proclaims that the nuclear freeze movement is Soviet inspired, we will know that it is consciously lying. Its frantic efforts to influence the bishops should not have been crowned with success, but they do demonstrate an understanding, however perverse, of the home-grown nature of nuclear dissent.

When, last autumn, the bishops issued their pastoral letter on war and peace, they permitted themselves the phrase "marginally justified" when they spoke of "nuclear deterrence." This, more than any other of their ruminations, caused the vials of Republican wrath to be emptied over them. Sadly, plans to reverse the spirit and letter of the pastoral statement were already in train. The principal players were—and are—Bishop John O'Connor of the Military Vicariate (the equivalent of a Catholic diocese in the armed services); Judge William Clark, Reagan's strongly Catholic national security adviser; Buckley and Novak, an odd couple of Catholic columnists and pseudomoralists who bid fair to replace the other duo of almost the same name; and Clare Booth Luce. The unfolding of events went like this.

Bishop O'Connor is a member of the Bishops' Committee on War and Peace. He also runs, under the aegis of Terrence Cardinal Cooke, a long-windedly named outfit going under the rubric of The Pope John Paul II Center of Prayer and Study for Peace. On its board of directors sits Clare Booth Luce, who is also, handily enough, a member of President Reagan's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. As William Buckley tells it:

> A copy of the draft accordingly came to her attention. She did a very sensible thing with it—as is her wont—and turned it over for comment to the principal adviser to President Reagan for national security affairs, Judge William Clark.

Judge Clark did more than "comment" on the document; he wrote a 4,000-word letter, enticingly headed "Dear Clare." He used her leak to mobilize conservative Catholicism against the awesome possibility that the bishops would pronounce nuclear weaponry immoral. As Buckley, the bellowing cheerleader of this enterprise, phrased the matter last October:

> Clark welcomes the opportunity to review the draft sent over by Mrs. Luce. One devoutly hopes the final draft will bear little resemblance, insofar as the points he had touched on are concerned, to the current draft.

There is no sense in minimizing (as some liberal Catholics are doing) the extent to which this "devout" hope has been fulfilled. The latest statement of the bishops is a full retreat from their suspicion of deterrence doctrine and a distinct watering of the wine concerning "noncombatant" casualties; it is also nastily evasive on whether the document is binding (a teaching of the church) or nonbinding (mere moral speculation). To take the most crucial consideration: the earlier draft carried the suggestion that Catholics should not associate themselves with nuclear war preparations. But it did not specifically address itself to Catholics in the war industry or the Defense Department. Because of this alleged discrimination between the laity and the professionals, it was decided to weaken that entire passage—to the point where no real moral advice is offered at all. This is Jesuit logic at its worst, and Father Bryan Hehir, a former pupil of Dr. Henry Kissinger, appears to be responsible for it.

While the Administration was counseling Bishop O'Connor to hang tough in the meetings, hearing his regular reports on the private proceedings and equipping him with mountainous documentation for his holy filibuster, its propagandists on the outside were not idle. Michael Novak, whose political existence these days is quasi-governmental (he was United States representative to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights), wrote a treatise entitled "Moral Clarity in the Nuclear Age." It is distributed and promoted by William Buckley. The essay, which is alternately hateful and risible, is timed to exert maximum influence on next month's deliberations by the bishops on their final draft.

The moral and intellectual vacuity of Novak's screed is such as to limit this possibility. It speaks of the "unjust" use of thermonuclear weapons as if there were a just use, and it solemnly instructs us that "the prophecies in the Book of Revelations exceed even the horrors of the Twentieth Century." Still, a similar kind of debased reasoning can be found in the latest pastoral, which condemns only "unintended" civilian casualties and thus betrays an abject refusal to engage the scope and magnitude of the issue.

The week before last was Holocaust Memorial Week in Washington. It has been impossible to forget that the last time the Roman Catholic Church was faced with an inescapable moral test, it failed it. In her enthralling and incisive book *Into That Darkness* (Vintage, $6.95), Gitta Sereny has a chapter on the attitude of Pope Pius XII toward the extermination of the Jews. She shows that among his many reasons for not condemning the Final Solution was a desire to avoid weakening Nazi morale. Since he regarded Russia as the paramount enemy, he did not want to create divided loyalties among German Catholics. This is the very argument used against the condemnation of nuclear war preparations in our own day—with the difference that the next Solution really will be Final. The Catholic church prefers the heresy of Americanism to the heresy of humanism, as perhaps was to be expected. And the Administration has employed and embodied the reasoning of Pius XII and the tactics of Cardinal Spellman.

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CENTRAL AMERICA WATCH.

In a speech on March 4 to the San Francisco Commonwealth Club, President Reagan took offense at a reporter's suggestion that the proposed increase in military aid to El Salvador looked like a replay of the early days of the Vietnam War. "I can give you assurances," Reagan said, that "there is no parallel whatsoever." Other U.S. officials have stated, however, that the U.S. stake in El Salvador is far more important than it ever was in Vietnam. Said Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Inter-American Affairs Nestor Sanchez, "Vietnam was 10,000 miles away. El Salvador is . . . right at our doorstep."

In the back rooms of the Pentagon and the Salvadoran armed forces' Estado Mayor, Vietnam is not just a metaphor but the very blueprint for an ambitious "rural pacification" program scheduled to begin in the next few months. Proceeding by a plan of intensive military action in the key agricultural provinces of Usulután and San Vicente, followed by "civic action" projects of public works and community development, the Salvadoran Army hopes to accomplish what it has thus far failed to do: stem the tide of guerrilla advances and win civilian hearts and minds.

When the new "national battle plan" was leaked to the press in mid-March, U.S. officials in El Salvador candidly compared it to CORDS—Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support—the program which coordinated pacification in Vietnam from 1967 to 1973. Like CORDS, the Salvadoran strategy has three phases: a massive military sweep through rebel-contested areas, the organization of surviving civilians into civil defense patrols and the establishment of army-directed social and economic development projects.

The Salvadoran plan so far envisioned does not approach the scale of CORDS, which at its height involved 7,000 U.S. advisers—from the Pentagon, the C.I.A., the State Department, the Agency for International Development and the U.S. Information Agency—spread throughout South Vietnam's forty-four provinces. Like CORDS, however, the plan for El Salvador will place A.I.D. civilian operatives in the field. And there will be training programs for the Salvadoran Army that will create 350-man *cazador* (hunter) light battalions for each of the country's fourteen provinces, analogous to the "hunter-killer" squads that combed South Vietnam in search of Vietcong guerrillas.

The Salvadoran Army, however, has been unenthusiastic about the Vietnam models for counterinsurgency techniques. According to former South Vietnamese Gen. Tran Dinh Tho, the initial stage of pacification must involve "the breaking down of government forces into small elements for a careful search to destroy the remnants of the enemy or those enemy who tried to escape by mixing with the populace."

Salvadoran Defense Minister Gen. José Guillermo García, who resigned under fire last week, had been reluctant to adopt such tactics, and his failure to prosecute the war according to a national plan led to deepening divisions within the ranks. In January, Lieut. Col. Sigifredo Ochoa Pérez organized an open rebellion in Cabañas province, where he had conducted a successful counterinsurgency campaign. A faction within the army, spearheaded by Ochoa and including air force chief Col. Juan Rafael Bustillo, First Battalion commander Col. Adolfo Blandón and Constituent Assembly president Roberto d'Aubuisson, called for García's resignation. His departure removes a principal impediment to CORDS-style pacification.

The revival of the CORDS model for El Salvador resonates with the assault on the history of the Vietnam War mounted by the U.S. military and some revisionist historians who maintain that politicians, not soldiers, lost the war. "The success of pacification [in Vietnam] remains one of the least known victories of the war," *Army* magazine wrote in July 1982. In the same issue, James McCollum, a professor of organization theory at Alabama's Auburn University, said, "CORDS defeated the insurgency in Vietnam, but it could not defeat a mainforce invasion." That analysis leads American strategists to believe that antiguerrilla efforts would be sufficient to pacify rural El Salvador because no "mainforce" equivalent of the North Vietnamese Army is present in the country or the region.

U.S. officials hope the counterinsurgency campaign in El Salvador can be waged without producing human rights abuses which would further undermine popular allegiance to the government. But neither the Salvadorans nor the Americans have resolved the central dilemma of pacification: how to weed out a clandestine network of civilian supporters of the guerrillas without indiscriminately killing innocent people.

In Vietnam the question was resolved on the side of terror. Under CORDS auspices, the C.I.A. ran Operation Phoenix, described by CORDS director William Colby (later appointed to head the C.I.A.) as "an essential part of the war effort" aimed at "neutralizing" the Vietcong underground. Four years after its inception, two intelligence operatives, K. Barton Osborn and Michael J. Uhl, told a House subcommittee that Vietnamese were randomly rounded up, tortured and murdered by Americans as part of the program. Osborn said that reconnaissance units sent to find suspected Vietcong guerrillas "had the primary mission of assassination." Those captured, he said, were either tortured to death or thrown from helicopters, frequently by American soldiers.

The record of the Salvadoran Army, as well as the participation of the country's civil defense units in human rights abuses, suggests that pacification in El Salvador will also mesh with terror. In February, army troops accompanied by civil defense patrolmen murdered seventy *campesinos*, including seven members of a progovernment Indian cooperative, near Suchitoto. According to the army, its troops were attacked by armed guerrillas. According to the U.S. Embassy and the Salvadoran government's Human Rights Commission, army troops rounded up the seventy peasants. The corpses were found with their thumbs tied behind their backs, and with other emblems of torture.

CYNTHIA ARNSON

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ARTICLES.

THE WARSAW UPRISING

Antifascists in The Ghetto

DANIEL LAZARE

Forty years ago, on April 19, 1943, the Warsaw Ghetto uprising began. Although the revolt is usually hailed as the apotheosis of Jewish nationalism, it is more accurate to call it a battle in the larger war against fascism; and the leftists who led the resistance were motivated at least as much by the ideals of socialism as those of Zionism.

Indeed, the uprising was first of all a class revolt which began as a campaign of robbery and assassination against well-placed and well-to-do Jews who were regarded as having betrayed the ghetto and enriched themselves by collaborating with the Nazis. It was organized and led mainly by the parties of the extreme left, including the Communists and the socialist Bund, which were both vociferously anti-Zionist. Even among the Zionists, it was the socialists who were the vanguard of resistance. The fighters raised the Red flag as well as Polish and Jewish banners, and on May Day, thirteen days into the revolt, many of them gathered in underground bunkers to sing the "Internationale."

The Jewish community of Warsaw was factionalized and highly politicized when the Nazis arrived in 1939, and its reaction to the "New Order" was far from uniform. Orthodox Jews, for instance, with their veneration of martyrdom, were resigned to their fate, even though they were particularly abused by Nazi soldiers and Polish anti-Semites, who beat them, mocked their clothes and pulled their beards. When the Nazis forced all Jews to live in the ghetto, the Orthodox considered the edict a judgment of God on the apostasy of modern Jews and an opportunity to return to traditional piety and isolation. The Nazis evidently recognized this, for they funneled aid to Orthodox schools and institutions through Jewish gangsters whom they controlled.

Conservative Zionists were also, for the most part, passive. It has become a commonplace observation that the Nazis generally appointed solid members of the bourgeoisie to posts in their puppet governments, rather than anarchic local fascists. Among Eastern European Jews, the party of bourgeois respectability was the center-right General Zionists, which provided nearly half the members of the Jewish councils set up by the Nazis to administer the newly created ghettos throughout the region, according to Isaiah Trunk's exhaustive 1972 study, *Judenrat*. About a quarter of the members of the Jewish ghetto police, who rounded up hundreds of thousands of Jews destined for concentration camps, were General Zionists.

The Revisionist Zionist party, the only Jewish party that can properly be described as tending toward fascism, was an even more resolute collaborator; its members made up 43 percent of the Jewish police force. Before the war, the Revisionists, followers of the magnetic, militantly nationalist Vladimir Jabotinsky, had shocked their fellow Jews by parading in brown shirts and advancing a cult of military prowess not unlike mystical Italian and German fascism.

There are several reasons that the conservative and far-right Zionist parties played such a role. The Revisionists and the General Zionists were parties of the educated middle class, which had long looked to Berlin as a center of law and culture. Also, Revisionists received military training, which made them particularly well suited for police work.

But there is another explanation, one which is deeper and more ideological. The Warsaw Ghetto, surrounded by a ten-foot-high brick wall topped with barbed wire and broken glass, resembled both a concentration camp and a miniature Jewish state, albeit a vassal state. In the beginning, the sight of ghetto council (Judenrat) members and Jewish policemen sent a thrill of pride through those Polish Jews who had never believed that Jews could be in positions of authority. But as time went on, the Jewish cops and the councilmen took on more and more of the characteristics of the higher authorities—the Nazis—from whom their own power was derived.

The herding of a half-million people into an area of about one and a half square miles exacerbated longstanding social and political tensions. As the number of beggars and children engaged in smuggling grew, so did resentment against the Jewish police, with their incessant demands for payoffs and their harassment of the poor.

Only one ghetto inhabitant in twenty had a job, at near-starvation wages; most people survived by begging or selling their possessions. By mid-1941, half the people in the ghetto were near death from starvation; the other half were merely hungry. Poor Jews suffered a long list of injustices. Tens of thousands were drafted into forced-labor battalions, while wealthier Jews escaped by paying a modest fee to the Judenrat. The Judenrat imposed taxes on doctors' prescriptions amid raging epidemics and on bread amid widespread hunger.

Corruption and profiteering were rampant throughout the ghetto bureaucracy. For a small minority, perhaps 10,000 people, life had its comforts and pleasures, in some cases even more than before the war. One ghetto memoirist fairly seethed with anger as he described well-stocked cafes and restaurants filled with the wartime nouveaux riches: "Jewish Gestapo agents, Jewish police officials, rich merchants who did business with Germans, smugglers, dealers in foreign exchange."

Such conditions provided fertile soil for the leftist groups. "Political publications sprouted like mushrooms after rain," recalled Emmanuel Ringelblum, the ghetto historian who preserved archives and memoirs in metal boxes and

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milk cans. Newspapers with names like *Proletarian Thought*, *Avant-Garde* and *Ferment* proliferated in an almost laissez-faire atmosphere in which the Nazis seemed more concerned with robbing the Jews than with controlling what they said or wrote. The period of relative freedom came to an end in April 1942, when the Nazis rounded up fifty-two Jews, most of them associated with leftist publications, shot them and left their bodies lying in the streets as a warning.

The horror grew exponentially thereafter. The deportation of 5,000 to 6,000 Jews a day to Treblinka—what ghetto diarist Chaim Kaplan called "a living funeral"—began on July 22 and continued through September 12. More than 300,000 people who had been assured that they and their families would be spared were seized by the Jewish police, who ferreted their victims out of hiding places and herded them onto cattle cars. High-ranking police officers demanded money, jewels and sex in return for allowing people to escape the death shipments.

About 70,000 Jews were left behind, and the formerly teeming ghetto was disquietingly empty. Most of the children had been carried off, along with most of the old. "Men tore the hair out of their heads at the thought that they had allowed their nearest and dearest to be hauled away with impunity," Ringelblum observed. "Children reproached themselves aloud that they had allowed their parents to be carted away."

The revolt, when it came, was the result of careful military and political planning. The political parties, and especially their youth groups, formed the backbone of the uprising. The main armed resistance group was called the Jewish Fighting Organization, and the original impetus for it, in the spring of 1942, came from the ghetto's Communists and left-wing Zionists. The Marxist Hashomer Hatzair, with its doctrine of two Jewish homelands, Palestine and the Soviet Union, was particularly important. With the addition of the Bund (which first had to overcome certain ideological objections), the J.F.O. had between 600 and 800 armed men and women, who were organized into twenty-three fighting units—five of them Communist-led, four led by Bund members, four commanded by the Hashomer Hatzair and the rest headed by representatives of other leftist Zionist groups.

At a December 1942 conference, the left-wing Jewish political leaders in the ghetto drafted a charter for the J.F.O., assigning it three missions: resistance to the Nazis; "active struggle" against workplace administrators, foremen and Gestapo agents; and "terrorist actions against the Jewish police, Jewish communal leaders, and the Werkschutz [factory guards]." The terrorism had actually begun three months before the meeting, during the mass deportations, when the head of the ghetto police, Josef Szerynski, a Jew who had converted to Christianity, was shot and wounded. Jacob Lejkin, his chief deputy, was killed two months later. Following the conference, thirteen other Jewish policemen who had figured prominently in the deportations were assassinated, as was the Judenrat member who had served as the liaison with the S.S. security office.

In the next few months, the ghetto was honeycombed with underground bunkers, tunnels and hidden passageways. Money for weapons and provisions was raised through the time-honored partisan technique of expropriation, i.e., it was stolen from smugglers, speculators, policemen and factory owners. And money was confiscated from the Judenrat treasury and the ghetto bank. When Maksymilian Lichtenbaum, the head of the ghetto council, refused to pay his "war tax," his son was held for ransom.

The battle, which began when the Nazis moved in for the final liquidation of the ghetto, was a vastly unequal affair, in which pistols and Molotov cocktails were pitted against machine guns, flame throwers and even fighter planes and bombers. Nonetheless, the ghetto guerrillas succeeded in tying up 2,000 German troops for four weeks. Thousands perished when Maj. Gen. Juergen Stroop, the S.S. officer in charge of putting down the rebellion, used fire to flush out the Jews. On April 25, he reported that the ghetto was "a gigantic sea of flames." On May 16, Stroop ordered the largest synagogue in the ghetto destroyed and declared that the revolt was quelled. Bands of "rubblemen," however, held out well into July.

The Jewish Fighting Organization was not the only force to take part in the uprising. There were some 2,000 members of unaffiliated "wild groups," who gave the revolt its quality of a mass uprising. And there was the Revisionist militia, whose numbers had swelled in the weeks before the outbreak of fighting from 150 to 400.

A rising figure among the prewar Warsaw Revisionists was a frail-looking young man with a fiery oratorical style named Menachem Begin, who was in the Soviet zone following the partition of Poland in 1939 and thus was spared

DRAWINGS BY MONICA INCISA

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the fate of his comrades in Warsaw. Relations between the well-armed Revisionist movement and the Jewish Fighting Organization were cool. The Revisionists took part in the uprising "out of purely Jewish national motives," a Revisionist historian wrote after the war, while the J.F.O. "assumed a political and ideological colouring and wished to regard its activities in the light of the anti-fascist struggle."

Ringelblum, himself a left-wing Zionist, agreed with that assessment. The Revisionists, he wrote, were "inclined towards a form of fascism on the Italian pattern. The [Jewish Fighting Organization], naturally, enjoyed much wider support." Ultimately, the war against fascism in which the Jewish resistance had enlisted came down to a fight solely for survival. □

THE NEW DELHI SUMMIT

Why Nonaligned Isn't Neutral

MICHAEL MANLEY

In reporting on the nonaligned nations' summit in New Delhi last month, Western journalists—especially those from the United States—were obsessed with a single "angle": Did the choice of Indira Gandhi as the movement's new leader mean that it would return to a policy of *genuine* nonalignment? Implicit in the question is the assumption that the retiring chairman, Fidel Castro, ran the movement according to Marxist-Leninist principles for the past four years.

The question also presupposed that "nonaligned" means "equidistant" between the United States and the Soviet Union. Such a definition is more reflective of the view from Washington, however, than of the view from New Delhi. To predict the nonaligned movement's course under Gandhi, one must adopt the perspective of the nations in it—rather than see it through Western eyes.

The first mistake most Western journalists make is to define nonalignment in cold war terms. It is true that the Nonaligned Movement was founded in the early 1960s partly in response to the pressures of the cold war, when both Washington and Moscow were importuning smaller, newly independent states to join their respective power blocs. Tito of Yugoslavia, Nehru of India, Nasser of Egypt and Sukarno of Indonesia, the founders of the movement, recognized the need for a third political grouping that could provide a collective shield against the superpowers.

Although that objective gave the movement its name, nonalignment has never been its raison d'être. The founders believed it should also actively support all struggles against imperialism, oppose the domination of any one state by another and seek solutions to the economic problems of the Third World.

In the ensuing years the number of members grew to the present 101. They came in all political hues: solidly pro-Western, procapitalist, semifeudal monarchies like Saudi Arabia; African socialist states like Tanzania and Zambia; Marxist-Leninist states like Cuba and Vietnam; and multiparty democracies like Trinidad and Tobago, India and Jamaica.

With such a diverse membership, unanimity is rarely achieved. Indeed, no question is actually put to a vote; instead, the group seeks to reach a consensus on the questions that come before it. That explains the long discussions that are a feature of every meeting; it also explains why the movement takes no position on many issues. On certain basic principles, however, the movement is united. Foremost among these is its own continuing independence as a political force. The movement also remains solidly committed to decolonialization, to the support of liberation struggles throughout the world (particularly those of the Palestinians, the Namibians and the black majority in South Africa) and to structural change in the world economic system.

When the Western press interprets nonalignment to mean that vague state of suspension between the superpowers it calls "neutrality," it misconstrues the purpose and the nature of the movement. Nonaligned countries cannot exist politically equidistant between Washington and Moscow, because that would mean being oblivious to the positions the superpowers take on issues that affect them. For example, if Washington and Moscow refuse demands for a change in the world economic structure that would be beneficial to the underdeveloped countries, most members of the movement would oppose both of them. If, on the other hand, Washington supports the South African government while Moscow supports the African National Congress, most nonaligned nations would disagree violently with Washington and applaud Moscow.

Fidel Castro's selection as chairman in 1979, and the decision to hold that year's summit in Havana, were the results of a consensus among the eighty-six nations that then made up the movement at the summit held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 1976. The overwhelming majority of members thought Castro was the right person for the job; Castro himself understood that the post carried an obligation to adhere to the movement's basic principles and support its policies, rather than to follow Cuban foreign policy.

Those of us who have worked in the movement can attest to the scrupulousness with which Castro fulfilled the obligations of his office. Obviously, Cuba vigorously advocated its own views on such vexing questions as which regime to recognize in Kampuchea. But so has every other country whose leader has served as chairman.

The trouble with Western journalists is that too often they interpret events in the light of preconceived notions instead of taking the trouble to find out the truth. For example, many believe that because Cuba is a Marxist-Leninist state, it cannot be nonaligned and its leader will attempt to impose his own nation's policies on the movement. Yet these same

Michael Manley, the former Prime Minister of Jamaica, is the leader of the opposition People's National Party.

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reporters have no difficulties seeing Saudi Arabia as nonaligned, even though it is a firm supporter of the West.

The major preoccupation of the New Delhi summit was the international financial crisis, which is threatening to wipe out the hard-won gains made by Third World countries over the last generation. Gandhi said that the crisis had originated in the West, and Castro warned that the worldwide recession will cause a political crisis that could lead to war.

The conference rejected the notion of reformist adjustments in the world economy and called for a structural transformation. It called for Namibian independence and Palestinian rights. Significantly, a cautious approach to the crisis in Central America was rejected: the delegates called on the United States to stop its interventions in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

An important message of the conference was contained in the style and substance of its leadership. Far from Gandhi substituting "moderation" for Castro's "radicalism," the two leaders sang a duet in close harmony. There were no shifts in policy on fundamental issues. Rather, the delegates affirmed their continuity with the past. □

Computer State

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

sweeping computerization of government and industry that is building a world where large organizations routinely collect detailed information about how we drive, where we sleep, what we buy, whom we talk to, where we go and even what we think. Whether the source is a bank, the Internal Revenue Service, the telephone company, the National Security Agency, a two-way cable television system or an insurance company, computerized surveillance is a largely unacknowledged reality of American life.

The powerful reach of modern surveillance is compounded by the increasing ability of the computers of separate organizations to talk to one another. Computer matching—the automatic correlation of information that has been stored in different data banks for different reasons—is now a widely used and casually accepted practice.

"There is nothing new about matching," said Thomas McBride, until recently the Inspector General of the Labor Department. McBride, who now is a professor at Stanford Law School, is a leading advocate of this investigative technique.

"You do it as a reporter; I did it when I was a prosecutor," he said. "I remember, for example, when I was a member of the special team investigating Watergate and I matched the lists kept by the President's secretary—Rosemary Woods—against the Federal campaign contributions roster. What is new, what is exciting, is that so much more information is now stored on computer tapes. This enables you to match 1,000 names or 100,000 names against telephone numbers, Social Security numbers or whatever in a matter of seconds."

The systematic use of computers to detect fraud in certain Federal programs began under President Carter. But with the election of President Reagan, computer matching has come into vogue. McBride, in fact, was co-chairman of a Presidential committee established to expand the use of the technique.

"There are now about sixty different Federal programs that depend on the income level of the individual to determine eligibility," McBride explained. "Everything from weatherization grants to Head Start. There just isn't any question that this methodology should be widely applied, that it has an enormous potential for eliminating fraud or erroneous payments and saving the taxpayers billions of dollars each year."

McBride acknowledged that computer matching is being used mostly in programs aimed at the poor. "We're now trying to get some matches going that don't have this welfare tilt," he said. "Disaster loans are one example. This is an area where benefits primarily go to business people, agribusiness people, and where some quite wealthy people were into some pretty heavy double dipping. Medical providers, like pharmacists, doctors and hospitals, are another area where big bucks can be saved. I'm quite sure there are a number of areas in the Pentagon where matching might be a big-ticket item."

And he admitted that there are dangers inherent in the widespread use of computer matching. "Making sure that computer data bases are clean and accurate is very difficult," he said. "Social Security, for example, is really a mess. Sure, there is a real potential for abuse. That's why we need very careful controls. I certainly am not prepared to say, for example, that all Federal and state program managers should automatically get access to everyone's income tax return. I think that would be going too far."

In a cream-colored three-story office building in an industrial section of Los Angeles, just off the freeway to Disneyland, is the headquarters of the Bureau of Child Support of the Los Angeles County district attorney's office. With 1,007 investigators, lawyers, technicians and clerks, the bureau employs exactly half of the men and women who prosecute all the crimes that occur within the county's borders.

Robert Kiehl is one of a new category of law enforcement officers whose authority comes from social welfare law rather than from criminal statutes. He has developed a computerized system which automatically diverts state tax refunds owed to "runaway parents" to the support of their children. Kiehl, who is 54, has a full gray mustache which dominates his mournful face. He speaks in the quiet monotone of many longtime government employees. "The seizing of tax refunds is just one aspect of our child-support program, and a rather new one at that," he said. "Here is how it works. Once we have a court order on a parent and there are delinquencies built up on that order for support of a

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child receiving public assistance, we send the name up to the Franchise Tax Board. They run the name through their computer. If the parent is due a refund, it is intercepted and used by the state to offset the support going to the child."

The program appears to be quite efficient. According to Dan Hicks, an analyst with the California Department of Social Services, in the second year of the system's operation the district attorneys of the state's fifty-eight counties submitted 117,000 names to the Franchise Tax Board. The result: more than $10 million in tax refunds was taken from delinquent parents and given to the state to defray the costs of supporting their dependents.

The refund-intercept program is only one way computers help Los Angeles County district attorneys force parents to meet their financial obligations to their children. The computers in the district attorney's office have direct electronic links to the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Employment Development Board and the Criminal Justice Information System and other data banks, providing county investigators with information that helps them locate parents who have left their children without support.

Louis Hays, the director of the Federal Child Support Enforcement Office, provided the perspective from Washington. "This year the whole program will result in support payments being made by about 1 million parents—400,000 who have applied to receive Aid for Dependent Children, 600,000 who have not," he said.

"During roughly the same time period, the states asked us for address information on 200,000 individuals. We put these names on magnetic tapes and periodically submitted them to the Internal Revenue Service, the Social Security Administration, the Defense Department, the Veterans Administration and the National Personnel Record Center. Using their computers, the agencies search their records for information about the people whose names have been submitted by the states. Most of the states have terminals directly linked to us, and when we get a hit—which happens in about 60 percent of the cases—we send the information we have found back to the state."

Hays believes, however, that obtaining the home addresses and places of employment of runaway parents is the simple part of the problem. "You can locate people easily. You can go to court easily. But that doesn't mean you can make them pay," he said.

When I asked him about the possibility that his system might someday be turned against another target, let's say civil rights protesters taking part in legal demonstrations, he became uneasy. "I balk at the implication in your question that parents have a right to avoid their responsibilities," he said. "And besides, the average state doesn't have a very sophisticated computer tracking system yet. I am not saying that we never could get to 1984. I'm just saying that the facts don't support such a premise at the present time."

Michael DuCross, a Canadian-born Indian, lives in Huntington Beach, California, a small city halfway between Los Angeles and San Diego. At about 9 P.M. on March 24, 1980, DuCross, a slight man with a gentle smile and wire-rimmed glasses, decided to drive to a local supermarket for some groceries. Just after he turned his 1976 Pinto into the parking lot of a shopping center near his apartment, the flashing red lights of a police car filled his rear-view mirror. He had made an illegal left turn.

The policeman, using his two-way car radio, asked for a check on DuCross. A clerk in the Huntington Beach police station punched DuCross's name and driver's license number into a terminal. The information was instantly flashed to Sacramento, the state capital. Nothing. Then it was flashed 3,000 miles east to the F.B.I.'s computerized National Crime Information Center in Washington.

Pay dirt. Back across the continent came the answer. The F.B.I.'s records said DuCross was wanted by the Federal government because on Christmas Eve of 1969 he had gone AWOL from the Marine Corps. Based on that information, DuCross was taken to the brig at Camp Pendleton, California. Five months later, the charges were dropped and he was set free to pick up the pieces of his life. The government released DuCross after discovering he had never been AWOL. He had left the Marine Corps in 1969 under a special discharge program for resident aliens.

Thus, an error somewhere in the government's computerized records and surveillance system reached across a vast expanse of time and space and violently interrupted the life of a single Mohawk Indian.

The growing number of privately operated surveillance systems also make errors. In 1977, Harvey Saltz, a former deputy district attorney in Los Angeles, formed a company called U.D. Registry Inc., which provides landlords with information about prospective tenants. Using data obtained from the court records of suits filed by landlords against tenants, Saltz compiled a computerized list of more than a million names from all over the Los Angeles area. Some 1,900 landlords pay him an annual fee ranging from $35 to $60 and a search fee of $7.50 to find out whether potential tenants have been sued by their landlords in the past.

But as Lucky Kellener, Barbara Ward and many others have learned, such information-retrieval systems frequently make mistakes. Kellener, a Los Angeles lawyer, paid his brother's rent on one occasion in 1978. Some months later, when his brother was evicted, Kellener's name was inadvertently included in the papers filed by the landlord in court. U.D. Registry transferred the incorrect information to its computer, and Kellener was recorded as an undesirable tenant. Three years after he paid his brother's rent, in December 1981, Kellener decided he needed a larger apartment. "I went to three apartment houses but was turned away," he said. "They kept saying things like, 'Someone was here before you,' or 'We'll get back to you.' You know, the brushoff."

After the third rejection, a landlord unintentionally let Kellener in on the dark secret: there was a computerized blacklisting service and his name was on its list. "It's creeping McCarthyism," he said. "Actually, it's worse. McCarthy usually did his stuff out in the open. This operation does it under the table."

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Barbara Ward was another victim. In 1972 she moved to Los Angeles, rented an apartment and found it was infested with cockroaches and rodents. When her landlord refused to deal with the infestation, she gave him thirty days' notice. He countered with an eviction notice. Ward went to court armed with county health records to support her case. The landlord did not show up. The judge ordered the case dropped from the calendar. A few years later, several landlords refused to rent Ward an apartment because of the listing in U.D. Registry's computer that she had once been served with an eviction notice. Neither Kellener nor Ward knew of U.D. Registry's existence, let alone that it was transmitting false information that would severely damage their reputations.

In the late 1960s President Johnson, disturbed by the riots that took place after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and the proliferating antiwar demonstrations, ordered the Army to begin collecting information on potential "subversives" so that the Federal government could prevent civil disturbances. The program became a Frankenstein's monster. In hearings conducted in 1971 by Senator Sam Ervin's Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights, it was revealed that the Army had gathered information on the political activities of about 100,000 people, including members of Congress such as Representative Abner Mikva and members of organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Friends Service Committee and the N.A.A.C.P.

With few directives to guide them, Ervin said, Army intelligence agents "monitored the membership and policies of peaceful organizations who were concerned with the war in Southeast Asia, the draft, racial and labor problems, and community welfare. Out of this surveillance, the Army created blacklists of organizations and personalities which were circulated to many federal, state and local agencies who were asked to supplement the data provided. Not only descriptions of the contents of speeches and political comments were included, but irrelevant entries about personal finances, such as the fact that a militant leader's credit card was withdrawn. In some cases, a psychiatric analysis taken from the Army or other medical records was included."

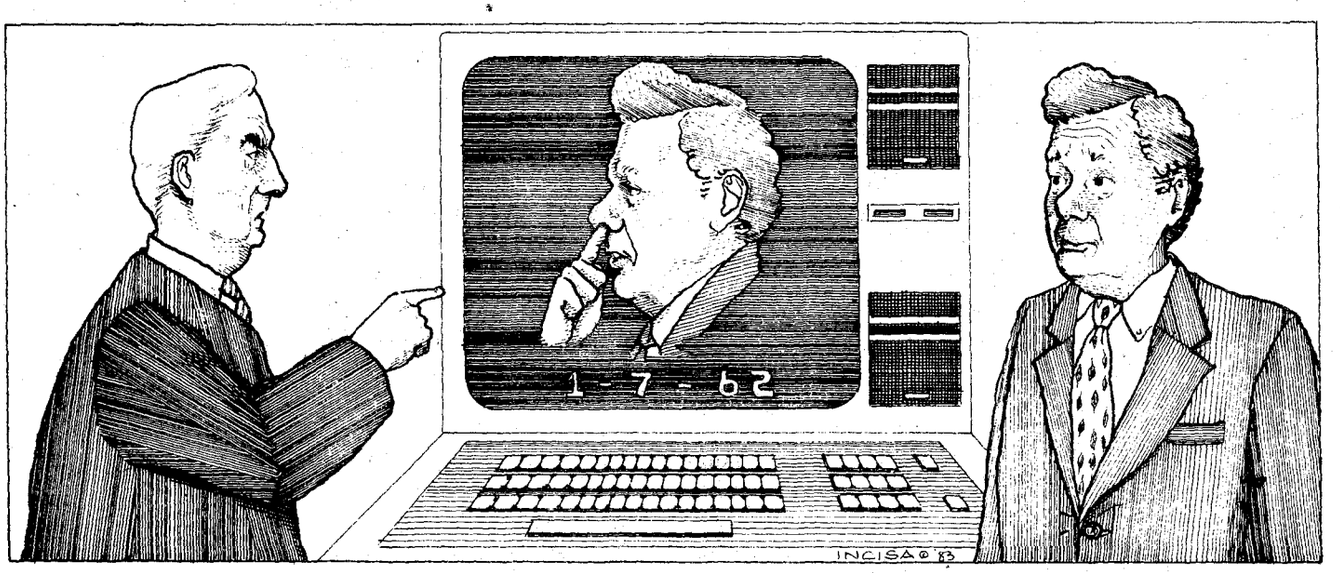
Ervin's subcommittee found that the information collected on individuals who opposed the Johnson Administration's policies was filed in four computers, located in the headquarters of the Army Intelligence Command (Fort Holabird, Maryland), the Continental Army (Fort Monroe, Virginia) and the Third Army Corps (Fort Hood, Texas), and at the Pentagon. Not only did the Army gather personal and political information; it had ordered its analysts to code the data so that the individuals could be listed in the computers according to various categories.

Ralph Stein, a young Army analyst, described for the subcommittee the confusing and sometimes arbitrary method used to code data into the Army's computers:

> To make the difficult decisions about what category a person belonged in, the analyst was required to examine reports and then resort to a special intelligence code. He had to apply various number combinations which indicated a person's beliefs or status. For instance, 134.295 indicated that a person was a non-Communist, while 135.295—a difference of one digit—indicated Communist Party membership or advocacy of Communism.

Computers are essential to the operation of many of the conveniences of modern life. Without computers, for example, the massive car rental business could not exist. By almost any measure of speed, efficiency and reliability, the service offered by car rental companies is astounding. But the use of computers means that each transaction of each customer involves creating a record that can be stored, modified and retrieved in a matter of seconds.

Officially, F.B.I. agents must obtain administrative summonses for any records they seek. But such summonses are available to them almost automatically. What is more, in most jurisdictions, Federal, state and local law enforcement officers have informal ties with a variety of recordkeepers, so that even this modest restraint is easy to get around.



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Ready access is guaranteed by the design of computerized credit and reservation networks.

Such a network can be wonderfully handy for the police—and other curious individuals as well. Peter Bronson (a pseudonym) is a first-class reporter I once worked with at *The New York Times*. A few years ago, while he was living in Washington and doing a great deal of traveling for the paper, he became infatuated with a young woman who worked at an Avis desk in Atlanta. "One day I came to Atlanta after being out of Washington for about a week, and I stopped by to see my friend," the reporter recalled. "The first thing she did was ask me what I had been doing in Los Angeles and Houston before coming to Atlanta. I was working on a pretty good story, and I'll tell you her tracking of my movements shook me up. It turns out that when someone has your Avis number, it is very easy to find out where you have been renting cars anywhere in the country. I've quit seeing this lady, by the way."

The five largest credit-reporting companies in the United States have a total of more than 150 million credit records in their computers. The information on file on each individual generally includes his or her full name, Social Security number, address, telephone number, name of spouse, place of work, salary, other sources of income, names of creditors, debt-payment history, arrest and conviction records, bankruptcies, tax liens and lawsuits. Some of this information has been volunteered by the person seeking credit; some has been collected by investigators.

In September 1976, an Ohio man named Bennie Bryant applied for a mortgage through the Hammond Mortgage Company. Before granting the mortgage, Hammond took the routine step of asking TRW Information Service, a credit company, to run a check on him. On September 28, a TRW representative called the mortgage company and said that its written report would show that Bryant had had credit problems with four firms. The mortgage company informed Bryant about the negative report, and he immediately told TRW that its information was not correct. Two days later, according to Federal judge Avern Cohn, who presided in a suit Bryant later brought against TRW, the report was sent to the mortgage company "in its original form," and Bryant was denied the loan. "Subsequently, with a revision in the mortgage report and through the plaintiff's personal efforts, the loan was closed," the judge wrote. In December 1979, a Federal district court jury found that TRW had not followed procedures that would have assured the accuracy of its report, and awarded Bryant $8,000 in damages.

The giant computerized credit company, both during the trial and in a subsequent appeal, contended that Bryant's complaint was unjustified. As a matter of law, TRW argued, it has no obligation to determine the accuracy of the information it receives from businesses about the bill-paying habits of individual consumers. "Put another way," said Judge Cohn, TRW contended "it was an error to allow the jury to consider whether there is an obligation on the defendant to test the truthfulness and/or accuracy of the information it receives."

That is a troubling claim from a company which sells 35 million credit reports each year to 24,000 subscribers throughout the country. A visit to TRW's computer operations center, in a single-story unmarked building about three miles from its corporate headquarters in Anaheim, California, explains why the company has so strenuously opposed being held accountable for the accuracy of the information it collects, organizes and then provides its subscribers. Each month, TRW receives computer tapes from thousands of companies, reporting the status of every one of their customers' accounts. TRW's employees then use its massed computers—the largest commercial concentration of computers in the world—to lift the information from those tapes and organize it alphabetically and by region. The company thus can offer up-to-date data on approximately 90 million people to businesses making credit checks. More than 200,000 times each business day, a TRW subscriber types the name of a customer into its own terminal. Within three seconds, the inquiry reaches Anaheim, the information is located in TRW's computers and a report is flashed back to the waiting subscriber. Obviously, the largely automated system would not be able to function were the courts to force TRW to check the accuracy of the reports it receives from its subscribers.

According to TRW's lawyers, a significant number of reports containing incorrect information are routinely transmitted to clients. Each year, about 350,000 people register formal complaints about the accuracy of TRW's reports with the company's consumer relations department. And each year, as many as 100,000 of these complaints result in TRW changing the information in its computers. But, one must ask, how many incorrect entries are not noticed and how many of those that are noticed go uncorrected?

One other problem must be examined concerning surveillance and TRW. The company's consumer credit reporting system is operated by a single division, one small part of a huge conglomerate which provides a broad range of high-technology services for a variety of customers. One of those customers is the Central Intelligence Agency. Though the relationship between TRW and the C.I.A. is highly classified, it is known to involve the processing of computerized intelligence reports gathered by secret government satellites. TRW prides itself on the independence of its divisions, and there is no known instance when information in one division "strayed" to another. But the decision of the Census Bureau during World War II to give the Army demographic data that pinpointed the residences of Japanese-Americans in California—despite a law prohibiting such sharing of information—is instructive. How much pressure would the chairman of the board and the chief executive officer of TRW have to bring on the vice president in charge of the company's information division to persuade him to give the C.I.A. access to credit reports stored in the division's computers?

Kent Greenwalt, a professor at Columbia University's School of Law, discussed the indirect but powerful effects of computer surveillance in a report he submitted to the

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White House during the Ford Administration:

> If there is increased surveillance and disclosure and it is not offset by greater tolerance, the casualties of modern society are likely to increase as fewer misfits and past wrongdoers are able to find jobs and fruitful associations. The knowledge that one cannot discard one's past, that advancement in society depends heavily on a good record, will create considerable pressure for conformist actions. Many people will try harder than they do now to keep their records clean, avoid controversial or "deviant" actions, whatever their private views and inclinations. Diversity and social vitality is almost certain to suffer and in the long run independent private thoughts will be reduced.

The question looms before us: Can the United States continue to flourish when the physical movements, the buying habits and the conversations of most citizens are under surveillance by private companies and government agencies? Sometimes the surveillance is undertaken for innocent purposes, sometimes it is not. Does not surveillance, even the innocent sort, gradually poison the soul of a nation? Does not surveillance limit personal options for many citizens? Does not surveillance increase the powers of those who are in a position to enjoy the fruits of that activity?

Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote about this process some years ago:

> As every man goes through life he fills in a number of forms for the record, each containing a number of questions. . . . There are thus hundreds of little threads radiating from every man, millions of threads in all. If these threads were suddenly to become visible, the whole sky would look like a spider's web, and if they materialized like rubber bands, buses and trams and even people would lose the ability to move and the wind would be unable to carry torn-up newspapers or autumn leaves along the streets of the city. □

FOLLOW-UP.

NATIONAL WRITERS UNION

A Dream That's No Longer Deferred

JAMES RIDGEWAY

After a year and a half of preparation, the National Writers Union will be formally launched this weekend with a constitutional convention in Brooklyn. The union (or the Organizing Committee for a National Writers Union, as it was called in its formative stage) now has 1,500 dues-paying members, many of them journalists and nonfiction writers, but some of them poets and novelists.

"We are now ready to make our move to recruit a major share of American authors and freelance journalists, offering traditional union benefits and the power that comes with solidarity," says Barbara Raskin, chair of the national executive board.

Even before its transformation into a union, the organizing committee reached agreement on a contract with *Mother Jones* and is far along with plans to provide members with life and health insurance. The union hopes to be able to offer members such novel benefits as libel insurance and discounts on home computers. At least one local is interested in publishing its members' books.

The union "is giving people a tremendous sort of moral boost," says Andrea Eagan, treasurer of the union and a member of the national executive board. "Things can't get any worse for most of us. Here we are. We're all in it together, and we can really make some progress. Writers tend to work in isolation. For the first time it gives us a chance to get together and act collectively, not just to bargain but to put some muscle behind the things we have to have, to really grieve something in an effective way, and the moral support of knowing that you're not the only chump on the block."

The writers' union began as a series of meetings at *The Nation* and living room get-togethers among New York City writers in early 1981, partly as a result of interest in such a union raised by organizers of the American Writers Congress. At the Congress, in October of that year, the idea of a union received overwhelming support from participants in a workshop on the subject, and encouragement from delegates to the Congress. The New York group then became a coordinating committee, which encouraged the formation of locals in a dozen cities. Last May, delegates from those locals met in Princeton, New Jersey, to set up a national executive board. Since then, its leaders have been busy raising money, developing contacts within the labor movement and writing the rules that will govern the organization.

The founding convention will take place April 30 and May 1 at the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. Delegates from the locals will form a policy-making assembly, which will adopt a constitution and elect a new national executive board. The convention is open to all members, but only delegates may vote.

Labor support has been vital to the union's development. In New York, District 65 (United Automobile Workers) gave space for a national office. In Washington and Boston, the Communications Workers of America provided office space, photocopying equipment, help with mailings and organizing advice. The National Football League Players Association, the Writers Guild of America, the Graphic Artists Guild, the Service Employees International Union and the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union all have given assistance. Charles Perlik of the Newspaper Guild helped the union leadership establish ties with Lane Kirkland at the A.F.L.-C.I.O.

James Ridgeway writes a column with Alexander Cockburn in The Village Voice.

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The writers' union and the Newspaper Guild have complementary interests: the guild will continue to organize writers on the staffs of publications and the writers' union will organize freelancers. By improving the working conditions and wages of freelance writers, the pool of cheap labor into which publishers can reach during a strike will be reduced.

The argument among the organizers over who is eligible to join the union has been tentatively resolved in favor of a relatively open membership. Although there probably will be some publication criteria for eligibility, an applicant whose work has not been published can present evidence that he or she is indeed a writer—an unpublished novel or poem, a letter from an agent, even a rejection slip. "We just can't let the publishers decide who is a writer," says Eagan. "You've got to give some satisfactory evidence that you write [to be a member]. But you don't have to show evidence of making a living."

Over the last year the locals have been working to build membership through regional conferences and fund-raising parties. The annual national dues are $10, with local dues set by their members. Small foundation grants (totaling about $5,000) have been secured.

About two thirds of the membership is clustered in Boston, New York, Washington and San Francisco. (Boston's local is the largest, with 350 members.) Each of these locals has assumed a different task: Boston's publishes the newspaper, New York's provides help in drawing up grievance and bargaining procedures, Washington's wrote the draft constitution, San Francisco's played a main role in arranging ancillary services such as insurance coverage. There has been an effort, especially on the part of members in New York, to see that the new union represents writers across the country, not only in a few cities.

Nor are the big city locals the prime focus of the organizing activities. Among the most energetic locals is the Westchester County group, which has signed up seventy-five members. It puts out a newsletter, and it already has set up a grievance committee, which is representing members in several different disputes. The local is also exploring the possibility of getting involved in book publishing, perhaps in joint ventures with small presses.

The writers' union and *Mother Jones* have agreed on a two-year contract, which will set minimum terms for freelance writers in the union. The agreement calls for the magazine to issue standard written contracts to writers, with clear descriptions of assignments. It covers one-time North American English-language rights and establishes a minimum fee schedule for standard feature articles ($1,000 for a first assignment; $1,200 for a second assignment and $1,500 for a third).

"If after receiving an otherwise acceptable article," the agreement says, "*Mother Jones* determines that it wants an article substantially different in form and content from that assigned, the writer shall nevertheless be paid in full for the submitted work."

Mother Jones will set a guarantee, or "kill fee," at 25 percent of the purchase price, and will pay that when it receives a manuscript. It will notify a writer of its decision on an article within twenty working days of receipt of the manuscript, and if the piece is accepted, it will pay ten days later.

Once a writer has received the guarantee, he or she can be asked to make one set of revisions; after that, the writer can demand acceptance of the article before making further changes. If the magazine does not schedule the article within six months, the writer can demand the rights back. Expenses are to be paid ten days after the magazine receives a bill, and *Mother Jones* must respond to suggestions for stories within sixty days. The contract has been mailed for approval to all members of the union who have been or are now being published by *Mother Jones*.

"We are happy with the *Mother Jones* contract, but it doesn't represent everything we want," says John Dinges, chair of the constitution committee. "We're going to develop a model contract that will have some of the aspects of the *Mother Jones* contract."

The *Mother Jones* agreement is significant as a guide for future bargaining. Now it is a skeletal structure to which other issues can be attached. For example, efforts to include libel protection failed, although *Mother Jones* generally protects its writers in libel cases. The agreement does not give the writers' union any say in how the magazine is run, nor does it deal with the relationship of freelance pay to staff and managerial salary scales. It does not relate freelance rates to the publication's revenues. It does not give writers access to accounting records—information essential in union negotiations. Most important, there is no arbitration clause. What happens if the magazine and a writer disagree on one of the contract's terms? The threat of a strike is not generally applicable in the bargaining situations likely to arise between freelancers and publishers.

Under the draft constitution the union would press its bargaining activities through special councils. These would be made up of members who had written for a magazine, newspaper or book publisher with whom the union was seeking a contract. But all union members who have written for the publication could participate in the council's work and vote on any proposed contract.

The process might work like this: A group of union members who freelance for a magazine announce their intention to establish a bargaining unit for the purpose of obtaining a

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contract with the publisher. Before the unit could be certified by the national union, the group would have to make an extensive effort to include all other union freelancers who write for the publication. The national union would then appoint an advisory board to assist in bargaining.

This process aims to place the decisions over economic matters in the hands of writers who are affected by them. It also is designed to limit the possibility of "sweetheart" contracts between a publisher and a small group of friendly writers. And it tackles the problem raised by freelance writers who act as independent contractors, making deals with publishers that might be construed as violations of the antitrust laws. The union wants to demonstrate that bargaining units are made up of writers who have employee-employer relationships, not vendor-purchaser alliances.

The organizers have ambitious plans to offer members various services at reduced rates. They appointed Consumers United Group, a worker-owned cooperative, to develop insurance and other service schemes. The co-op is now prepared to offer a program of combined life and health insurance through one of its affiliates. The plan will include term life insurance up to $50,000. It is open to all writers' union members under 65, and requires only that they answer five basic health questions. The health insurance program will provide coverage up to $1 million with a $100 annual deductible ($200 for a family). It will pay 80 percent of medical expenses up to $2,500, and 100 percent of all costs above that. The policy is calculated to limit a family's actual expenditure to a maximum of $680 for any medical problem.

Consumers United is also working on a libel insurance policy, but here the going has been slower. Two major underwriters have expressed interest, but insurers are wary of writing a policy for a group that would include individuals who write investigative articles.

The co-op hopes eventually to involve the union in developing a prepaid legal services program and schemes for cutting the costs of auto rentals, travel and hotels. Among the most interesting ideas is one for an electronic data bank, or library, which is already available to other organizations through another Consumers United affiliate. Under this program, a union member might use his or her home computer to tap into electronic libraries such as The Source, Dow Jones or *The New York Times*. It might one day interface with a union-managed job data bank.

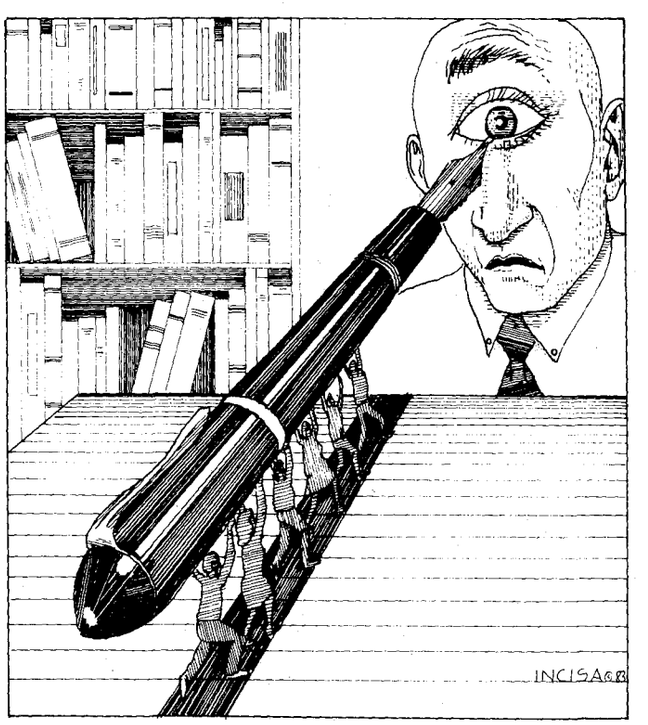
It will take months for the new membership to resolve the many questions affecting its operations that have been raised during the organization period. Who is a "writer"? The question is metaphysical, and the word is not easily defined to everyone's liking in legal terms. Some widely published writers do not want to be lumped categorically with cubs just off college newspapers, or with bright young aspirants with portfolios full of encouraging rejection letters.

Can editors be members? The more class-conscious unionists suspect that editors are the class enemy. And even at a less ideological level, if it is finally decided that editors can join the union, there will have to be a mechanism devised for removing an editor from contract disputes at his or her own magazine.

Can a publisher who has signed a union contract engage nonunion writers? If not, a publication (or book publishing company) would in effect formalize a "closed shop" in which only a union member could have an article or book published. That might seem to curb First Amendment rights, but staff-written publications are in effect closed shops.

It is not yet clear how political power is to be distributed between the national office and the several locals. In the proposed constitution, economic power lies with each bargaining unit, which is neither local or national. And there has been considerable discussion about an eventual affiliation of the writers' union and an already established big labor union, such as District 65 or the Newspaper Guild. While many members have favored independence, some have argued that affiliation would bring with it paid organizers and a powerful, prestigious presence. A small writers' local in Cleveland, for example, would have a strong ally in U.A.W. locals there, were the national to be affiliated with District 65.

Finally, it is far too early to tell whether the union will pursue a conservative bread-and-butter course of economic improvement and security for its members, or a more radical political position that would put it in the arena of national policy struggles. For the moment, it must be concerned with questions immediately affecting its members: whether to risk a strike and how to organize militant action, what publishers to target with its first contract demands and whether to demand arbitration. As it has done in bargaining with *Mother Jones*, the union will work out these important issues in the practical politics of labor negotiation in the months to come. □



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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Holding the Fort

MAURICE ISSERMAN

LABOR'S WAR AT HOME: The CIO in World War II. *By Nelson Lichtenstein. Cambridge University Press. 319 pp. $29.95.*

In a memorable passage in his 1952 book, *The Future of American Politics*, the political scientist Samuel Lubell described two visits to a United Automobile Workers local headquarters in the 1940s. On the first occasion, shortly after Roosevelt's third-term victory, he found a scene of "belligerent activity":

> Bulletin boards bristled with photographs of police clubbing strikers. . . . When the union's educational director heard that I was analyzing the election for the *Saturday Evening Post*, he stiffened suspiciously and seemed about to have me thrown out. Then, he began boasting freely of how class conscious the auto workers were and how ready they were to vote Roosevelt a fourth or a fifth term. He wore a lumber jacket.

Eight years later, following Truman's Presidential victory, Lubell returned to the local headquarters and found it a very different place:

> The strike photographs had come down from the bulletin boards and had been replaced by idyllic snapshots of the union's annual outings and sporting events. An honor roll listed fifty-nine union members who had been killed in the war. Nearby stood a cabinet filled with loving cups and other trophies won in city-wide UAW tournaments. The "class-conscious" educational director was gone—ousted in the UAW-wide fight against Communists which Walter Reuther led. On their desks, the new officers had propped the slogan, "UAW Americanism for Us." They were wearing green jackets and green silk legion caps.

In the intervening years, the flavor of the headquarters had changed from "one of street barricades and sitdown strikes" to one that was "almost like a lodge hall." Lubell's account of that transformation combines a trace of regret with a sense of inevitability. As the labor movement grew in size and influence, taking its place as a vital component of the "Roosevelt coalition," union leaders had no choice but to put aside the radical enthusiasms of their youth if they were to protect the hard-won gains of the 1930s.

Nelson Lichtenstein, a historian at Catholic University, has more than a few regrets about the direction the American labor movement took in the 1940s. But in *Labor's War at Home* he rejects the idea that there was anything inevitable in the changes Lubell described. Although I have some reservations about Lichtenstein's interpretation, this is an impressive work which offers a useful perspective on the origins of the crisis the labor movement faces today.

We tend to think of the later years of the New Deal as a time when labor was on the offensive. The new Congress of Industrial Organizations brought the gospel of unionism to the bastions of the "open shop" in the auto, steel, electrical manufacturing and rubber industries, and broke management's resistance in a series of dramatic confrontations, of which the Flint sit-down strike of 1937 is the most famous. The late 1930s *were* years of heroic struggle and stirring victory. But as Lichtenstein makes clear, they were also years in which the new industrial unions were extremely fragile. The U.A.W. had organized General Motors but not Ford; the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC) had organized U.S. Steel but not the "Little Steel" companies. There were similar gaps in all the industries in which the C.I.O. was attempting to organize. The "Roosevelt recession" of 1937 and 1938 led to the layoff of hundreds of thousands of workers and blunted the C.I.O.'s organizing drive. Moreover, even where C.I.O. unions had won contracts, their support among the rank and file fluctuated wildly. The situation in the steel industry, Lichtenstein says, was particularly serious:

> A contemporary observer put [SWOC's] dilemma this way: "Steel workers will go out and die for the union in the excitement of the picket line, but they'll be damned if they'll pay another dollar to that 'lousy shop steward.'" To remain solvent, SWOC had to resort to monthly dues picket lines that cajoled or threatened delinquent workers to pay up before they could enter the mill. Often steelworkers balked, and absenteeism ran as high as 25 percent on the days dues pickets patrolled mill gates.

In 1939, John L. Lewis publicly claimed there were 4 million C.I.O. members; the real number was probably less than half that. If the C.I.O. was to survive, and not go the way of the Knights of Labor, the Industrial Workers of the World and other failed experiments in militant unionism, it had to find ways to complete the organization of the mass-production industries and to consolidate support among its membership.

In 1940 and 1941 the war in Europe brought massive Federal spending for arms. Full-scale military Keynesianism succeeded where Roosevelt's half-hearted public works Keynesianism had failed. Unemployment was replaced by labor scarcity. Workers suddenly found themselves in a strong bargaining position and were more willing to respond to the C.I.O.'s appeals. As workers all over the country went out on strike, Ford and "Little Steel" finally bowed to their workers' demands for union recognition, while G.M. and U.S. Steel were forced to grant substantial wage increases. Nineteen forty-one, not 1937, guaranteed the survival of industrial unionism in America.

If the coming of war brought great opportunities to the C.I.O., it also brought great dangers. Employers, newspapers and conservative members of Congress complained that strikes were sabotaging national defense. In the spring of 1941, as the United States drew closer to full military involvement, Roosevelt became increasingly impatient with the strike wave; in June, he sent in troops to break an unauthorized strike at the North American Aviation plant in Los Angeles. C.I.O. leaders confronted a serious dilemma: here was the organizing opportunity of a lifetime, but if they continued to take advantage of it, they risked provoking a government reaction that could destroy all they had accomplished.

So they struck a deal. Union leaders surrendered the strike weapon for the duration of the war and accepted gov-

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ernment-imposed limits on wage increases. In exchange, the National War Labor Board offered the unions the "maintenance of membership" contract, under which unions gained what amounted to a closed shop in workplaces where they were the recognized bargaining agent. Workers were required to join the union and remain members in good standing as a condition of employment (an "escape clause" gave them a brief period in which they could withdraw from membership, but few went to the trouble it took to do so), and management began deducting union dues directly from workers' paychecks. No more fluctuating membership, no more dues picket lines, no more danger of being decertified as bargaining agent. The C.I.O. was here to stay, and with its new stability and prosperity, it doubled its membership before the war was over.

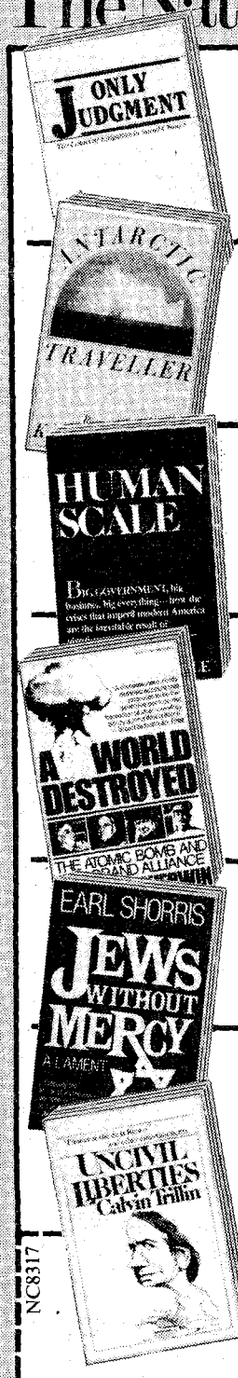
Lichtenstein thinks that the C.I.O. made a Faustian bargain, giving up its self-reliance and militance for resources and influence that only subverted the movement's original vision:

> The conditions of wartime unionism accelerated those bureaucratic tendencies that had been inherent in the new CIO unions from their moment of birth. . . . With membership growth virtually assured and with their eyes focused on Washington, union leaders felt less keenly the pressures generated within their own organizations, the grievances and complaints that inevitably arose out of the rapidly changing wartime work environment.

The no-strike pledge pitted union leaders against union members. After decades of privation, American workers were determined to get what they felt was their due, war or no war. With big corporations reaping record profits on defense contracts, appeals to patriotic self-sacrifice, whether they came from Washington or from C.I.O. leaders, fell flat. By 1944 the number of work stoppages and of workers involved in strikes surpassed the 1937 level. The C.I.O.'s top leaders found themselves allied with employers and with the government in attempting to end wildcat strikes.

The most powerful and original part of *Labor's War at Home*, really the heart of the book, is the chapter entitled "The Social Ecology of Shop-Floor Conflict." Unlike many radical critics of the union movement, Lichtenstein avoids the trap of mechanically contrasting "rank and file militancy" with "bureaucratic opportunism." He makes it clear that his sympathies lie with the

The Nation Book Mart



ONLY JUDGMENT

Aryeh Neier. Wesleyan University Press (1982). $17.95 Cloth. An important defense of the contemporary judiciary's activist role in extending the rights of neglected groups, but also a warning to certain protest groups—environmentalists, blacks, women, political dissidents—not to rely on the courts for social change.

ANTARCTIC TRAVELLER

Katha Pollitt. Alfred A. Knopf (1982). $5.95 Paper. In this collection of poems, *The Nation*'s literary editor combines a suppleness and beauty of language with unexpected images. These poems stay in the mind with the definition and completeness of paintings. Winner of the 1982/83 National Book Critics Circle Award for Poetry.

HUMAN SCALE

Kirkpatrick Sale. Perigee (1980). $8.95 Paper. A comprehensive and provocative account of the danger of growthmania, presenting real solutions, people-size solutions, to the impending crisis. Written in clear, lucid prose and laced with colorful historical anecdotes, *Human Scale* is urgent, highly readable and profoundly important.

A WORLD DESTROYED

Martin J. Sherwin. Vintage (1977). $4.95 Paper. "The excellent, often frightening study of the political and diplomatic circumstances surrounding the development and use of the first atomic bomb."—*The New Yorker*

"The quality of his research and the strength of his argument are far superior to previous accounts. Sherwin presents a comprehensible and disturbing picture of the continuities between World War II and the cold war."—*The New York Times Book Review*

JEWS WITHOUT MERCY

Earl Shorris. Anchor Press/Doubleday (1982). $14.95 Cloth. A provocative essay which argues that the Jewish neoconservatives have improperly expropriated the Jewish tradition by omitting what the author takes to be its most critical element—compassion.

UNCIVIL LIBERTIES

Calvin Trillin. Ticknor & Fields. (1982). $10.95 Cloth. A sparkling collection from Calvin Trillin's "Uncivil Liberties" column which appears every three weeks in *The Nation*. "He is achingly funny here on such diverse symptoms of the age as hot tubs, wearers of Nehru jackets, the Carters, the Reagans. . . . Serious cohesive humor from a very smart gadfly."—*Chicago Booklist*

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wildcat strikers. But he explains, rather than simply celebrates, those strikes. The real heroes of his book are the union's secondary leaders—shop stewards and local officers who were, for the most part, veterans of the early days of C.I.O. organizing.

How are strong insurgent movements created? As Lawrence Goodwyn showed in his account of the rise of populism, *The Populist Moment*, and as Lichtenstein argues here, there is more involved than the accumulation of grievances until they reach a point of spontaneous combustion. Insurgent movements are built upon a network of experienced activists who combine social vision with practical political skills. To quote Lichtenstein:

> Working-class militancy during World War II was centered not in the "cornfield factories" erected far from the oldest centers of UAW strength, but rather in the unionized shops of Detroit and other industrial centers. . . . Beginning in 1943, a growing number of secondary leaders sought to restore meaningful unionism to the shop floor. They did this not by championing quickie strikes . . . but by channeling the unrest they represented into a more unified and powerful movement. Especially when key union

PRIZE-WINNING POETS—1983

*The winners of "Discovery"—*The Nation*, '83" are Karen Chamberlain, Lee Edelman, Paul Genega and Mary Jo Salter. They will read their poems on Monday, May 9, at 8 P.M., at The Poetry Center, 92nd Street YM-YWHA in New York City. The contest was judged by Douglas Crase, Rika Lesser and J. D. McClatchy. Now in its ninth year, the competition represents a fusion of The Poetry Center's "Discovery" contest and* The Nation*'s Poetry Prize. It is designed to attract larger audiences to poetry by combining publication and recital. The contest is open to poets who have not published in book form. The winners are chosen on the basis of a body of work rather than on individual poems.*

—Grace Schulman, Poetry Editor

DESCENT AND SENTIMENT

The plane makes its descent on
The city where I lived once, flickering
Interstates, cloverleaves and loops,
As if Omaha, exploded, had strewn
Its ruby innards from sea to shining sea.
Still, there is the roc egg of the Capitol,
Floodlit—there, Washington's white cock—
Things recognizable amid the squat
Flat-top office buildings, all built
Since I've been gone. I remember D.C.

Southern—waxy magnolias, ornate columned
Mansions of mustachioed ambassadors,
Unbreathable summers, and you, dreamer,
Drifter, odd-jobber, first honest love
In a rowhouse long ago. I remember that
Whole summer beneath your sloping roof,
Laughing at nothing, drinking too much
Wine. We spoke three words through August
Then firmly shook good-bye. Me, back
To Nebraska; you, to Virginia, I think.

Now, here, buckled to my speeding seat,
I search, despite myself, for our
Rowhouse gable, for the window strobed
With candles and moon, though surely razed.
Of course I can not find it, more than
Count these lights, the beds I've known since
You. By landing the runway is just a blur
Of blue. Then the wheels touch, touch down
Firmly, and the dim dishonest longing
For the long gone bursts in flame.

Paul Genega

AT THE PUBLIC BATHS

(Kyoto, 1982)

Not many of her kind left,
she has to know, unwrapping the *obi*
sash from about her gray kimono,
a daily, unthinking ritual.
Another decade, two, they will be gone
who find this costume natural,
and in only months the newborn baby
fussing in a basket (lacquered
straw, and made for folding clothes in)
will have grown out of his tiny playpen.

Yet tonight it's coming down to this
shared moment for the two of them—
Grandmother cooing *hai, hai, hai,*
yes yes, she's heard it all before,
as she lifts, then plunges him with rough
certitude he'll survive into water
heart-stoppingly hot;
the infant shrunk to one blood-red cry
who learns, or will learn soon enough,
this is the way things are.

Under the ticking reel of ceiling
fans that slice fluorescent light
into sputtering flames, we lunge and jerk
like characters in a vintage movie,
while a Casablancan, ever-rising mist
calls up the queerest feeling
of having slipped into the past.
Although a sweating wallclock tells
real time, the homely black-and-white
of its method looks antique

Mary Jo Salter

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activists were fired, the local leadership might "adopt" a department stoppage and authorize a plant-wide closure. . . . Such factory-wide, even company-wide, walkouts were often well-led affairs conducted with the apparatus of the traditional strike: picket lines, mass meetings, and a clear set of bargaining demands often directed simultaneously at the international UAW, the plant management, and the National War Labor Board.

For Lichtenstein, the secondary leaders—who sanctioned wildcat strikes and who led the U.A.W.'s Rank and File Caucus, which challenged the union's adherence to the no-strike pledge—were the true defenders of the spirit of industrial unionism during World War II. But I wonder how long they would have survived if the top C.I.O. leaders had not been so accommodating to the war lords in Washington. In World War I, government repression and vigilante attacks demolished the Wobblies when they refused to get in step with the war effort. Would the C.I.O. have fared any better if it had repudiated the no-strike pledge? The government locked up more than 100,000 innocent Japanese-Americans in the name of national defense; given sufficient provocation, it might well have found room in the detention

COAST RANGE

Here the paved road turns
into a narrow trail. We sit
on the verge of sea-cliffs
repeating themselves north
like faces aging in a mirror.

You try to recall someone's
name, shake your head, say
you are losing your memory.
I study this fading
alignment of hills, feeling
waves of strange nostalgia
for places I've never been,
for things I hold now
in my hand. Your hand.
Wanting to go on, up
the trail, far past wherever
it might end. Over
the horizon, out to sea.

We walk the worn
cliff-edge, watch the loom
of windstruck shrub, sharp
slant of rock, white lip
far below. Squint, see
echo in further, fainter
ridges, layer by diminished
layer folded into gray
until the last, lost in haze
dissolves not in distance
but in some far corner
of the mind, fainter than
that phase of daytime moon
by which, you say, a love
once sailed away. Did we

never hold it all
intact? Walking back,
our eyes veer once more north,
the lineage of hills receding,
earth patiently repeating
its litany of visions, distances
we could not bear to enter.

Karen Chamberlain

ESPLANADE

Soon the colored awnings will have been rolled up,
the nameplates by the doorbells changed, the square unpacked.
Already evening draws a line it knows the night
must cross; and on the terrace where the orchestra
unrolled long waves of music—as if holding out
a mirror to the movements of the sea—no straggler
stops to hear the ocean's unaccompanied asides.

The gaudy flags are gone. Vernacular again,
we reacquaint ourselves with this, our own harsh
dialect of shutters and bare, boarded-up arcades.

You'll say the town looks medieval with its cold
stone walls and steeply angled light; and with your words
it will have come to pass, exactly as you say.

Before you speak—before the atmosphere, assenting
to the rhythm of your voice, puts off this moment—
let a kiss prevent your thought from taking shape, or
let this hand erase the image from your eyes. Beware

of likenesses—too much can change: the color of
the air, the very membrane of your breath itself
is permeable, breached with every utterance,

uncertain as a spinning coin that wobbles on
its rim before it turns up heads or tails. No chance
remark can claim this interval, this solstice out
of season. Any speech would prove prophetic,

any word, a solecism. Each would lie.
For if the peddlers' carts have shed their souvenirs,
the empty streets still take direction from their

memories of places toward which, lately, they were
led. But you have followed them too far. So when these
fingers lift your chin, as if by impulse, you'll be
caught off guard, surprised as you were just about to

comment on the cloistral charm that seems your point of
reference in this landscape. Then the nearest sound will
take its place instead—the constant grating of the
sea's machine, perhaps the softer whirring of an
insect's wing that ticks the way a compass needle ticks:
like some strange clock whose single hand can neither
rest upon, nor wander from, its single chosen hour.

Lee Edelman

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camps for a few thousand trouble-making union militants.

As it turned out, the C.I.O.'s formal adherence to the no-strike pledge provided protective cover for those militant secondary leaders who continued to defend the interests of rank and file C.I.O. members. Lichtenstein shows the negative consequences of the no-strike/maintenance-of-membership bargain: the labor movement's dependence on Washington and the Democratic Party to realize its goals, and the growing gap between top union officials and the rank and file. But he does not make clear what alternatives C.I.O. leaders had from 1941 to 1945, if they did not want to share the Wobblies' fate.

C.I.O. leaders supported the war. Rightly or wrongly (I think rightly; Lichtenstein thinks wrongly), they believed it was a just and necessary fight against fascism. They responded to the crisis of their own time and did not consider, or could not see, the ultimate consequences of their decisions. Short-term expedients have a nasty habit of turning into long-term structural restraints. A more charitable interpretation of the C.I.O. no-strike pledge than the one Lichtenstein offers in *Labor's War at Home* would deplore its consequences and still recognize its necessity. □

A Poet's Prose

BERNARD McCABE

THE SECOND LIFE OF ART: Selected Essays of Eugenio Montale. *Edited and translated by Jonathan Galassi. The Ecco Press. 354 pp. $17.50.*

In a speech delivered in Florence on the 700th anniversary of Dante's death and included in this volume, Eugenio Montale (1896-1979) had this to say: "That true poetry is always in the nature of a gift, and that it therefore presupposes the dignity of its recipient, is perhaps the greatest lesson Dante has left us." The accent on generosity of spirit is characteristic of Montale's own poetry, with its acceptance of a dialectic between the exclusive, detached profundities of the private self and a necessary engagement and communication with the world. Thus, his remarkable 1930s sequence "Dora Markus," an intense personal love poem, is addressed to the Jewish Dora, who as a victim of Nazism also becomes a symbol of human strength facing twentieth-century barbarism.

The Second Life of Art, the first collection of Montale's critical prose to appear in English, reveals a similar dialectic at work, with the same generous results. Montale insists many times on the poet's alienation, "the necessary solitude of the artist," then struggles into a sense of community, a sense he expressed clearly and simply in *Butterfly at Dinard* (1956), his collection of autobiographical short stories: "A man without any religious sense of collective life cannot but miss what is best in individual life, the life of man."

Montale wrote prodigiously. Between 1916 and 1976 he published more than 1,800 essays and critical articles. From 1948 onward he was a columnist for *Corriere della Sera* and an immensely skillful practitioner of that minor Italian literary art, the brief, pungent *feuilleton*, several examples of which are included here. He also regularly reviewed concerts and operatic performances for the *Corriere*. A tireless translator, he rendered into Italian Melville, Hawthorne, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Steinbeck, Faulkner and Dorothy Parker; Corneille and Cervantes; five of Shakespeare's plays; and many poets, including Blake, Dickinson, Hopkins, Hardy, Yeats, Pound, Eliot and Dylan Thomas. He seems to have read everything in the Romance languages and almost everything in English.

Montale's essays on modern British and American poets are naturally of special interest. Galassi gives us two each on Eliot, Pound and Auden. Montale felt a great affinity with Eliot. Here he is on *The Waste Land*: "Prosaic language exists side by side with the aulic, the tone becomes lyric through inner animation, not because it obeys the laws of the metronome. Starting from recitative, Eliot often arrives at song, reaches a high tone from the lowest, most conversational tone possible." He might have been describing his own practice in the 1920s and 1930s. There are other parallels—the two poets even shared the "objective correlative" idea—though surely F. R. Leavis was right in claiming that Montale had a greater range. He is secure where Eliot is insecure, open where Eliot is evasive. Reading "Xenia," a long poem in which Montale makes public in the most poignant and direct way his desolation at the death of his wife, we recall Eliot's fear of "undisciplined squads of emotion" in *Four Quartets*, the nervous drawing back, the inescapable Prufrockery.

When he turns to Pound, Montale is generous about what his work meant to European as well as to British and American poetry: "There is no poet of any importance in Europe who can say he owes nothing to American poetry." He also has a few shrewd blows to deliver, in a friendly way. He sees Pound as a *naïf*, putting forward "an ingenuous, inverted futurism," "a man who has not grown up . . . a poet who has gazed at himself too much in the mirror." He laughs a little at Pound's paraded learning, "rich in an abridged, night-school accelerated course culture," yet admits that this fellow of Stravinsky and Picasso is "the most originally composite poet known to modern history." Montale clearly found the *Cantos* hard going, but then, strikingly, suggests that they contain "a deluge of haiku which would astound posterity if the poem were largely to be destroyed," a judgment with which quite a few Pound readers might concur. Incidentally, Montale, who had practiced an "inner emigration" during the later Fascist years, and had been left threatened, unemployed and with few opportunities to publish, remains affectionately tolerant of "*lo zio Ez*," the privileged Uncle Ez, as Pound was known on Italian radio when he made those pro-Fascist and anti-Semitic wartime broadcasts.

Auden Montale obviously liked very much, both as a man and as a poet. Yet he is wary of him: Auden is too intelligent. He "lacks the *côté bête* that saves Yeats" (this is the kind of pungent remark that makes you want to have lots more Montale). "Will his triflings, his trapeze tricks, interest the readers of tomorrow, and those readers of today lacking a particular kind of education?" Montale catches here the limiting coterie side of much of Auden's work. Not in itself an original insight, of course, and one partly vitiated by a misreading of Auden's well-known lines in "In Memory of W. B. Yeats" about Kipling and Claudel being in the end forgiven their unsatisfactory views

Bernard McCabe is a professor of English at Tufts University. His critical articles and reviews have appeared in Commonweal, Commentary, Saturday Review *and many other journals.*

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because they wrote well. Montale simplifies this to: they'll be forgiven their bad verses because of their good verses.,

When you range as far and write as often as Montale did, some such slips must appear, and some repetitions and questionable judgments, too. "Certain of Eliot's parodies ('Sweeney Agonistes') are reminiscent of *The Mikado* and other musical libretti of Sullivan." Several slips there. Or, "Ernest Hemingway (the most naturally European—Stendhalian—of the American writers)." *Stendhal*? Nick Adams as Julien, or Fabrice, or Lucien? Perhaps Montale was pulling the reader's leg here; he was a witty and complicated man.

Of the pieces on modern European writers, the most comprehensive is on Italo Svevo, whom Montale, like Joyce, greatly admired. The essay on Dino Campana, often called "the Italian Rimbaud," shows how generous Montale could be toward a poet very different from himself. Paul Valéry is acclaimed ("a great genius"), but the praise grows faint: "Valéry has behind him a tradition of preciosity and obscurity in which he will take his place with honor." Other poets fare worse. He roundly castigates Paul Eluard's formless "uninterrupted" verse of the late 1940s, and more circumspectly, St.-John Perse's abstruseness. How strange, Montale wonders, that "a poet may win the unanimous admiration of his public without the issue of his comprehensibility even being raised."

I hesitate to be anything but grateful for all this rich and varied material. Yet it must be said that some of the essays on culture and society are stodgy, and some of the literary essays are ill chosen. Surely there must be a better piece on Montale's precursor Giovanni Pascoli than the pedantic little one offered here? And why include a thin sketch of Cavafy when we know (because Montale tells us) that he has written two substantial critical essays on him? The one example of music criticism, the absorbing "Words and Music," made me wish more had been included. And why is there nothing on Montale's contemporaries and near-contemporaries among the novelists, Gadda, Moravia, Carlo Levi, Buzzati or the younger Italo Calvino, most of them familiar enough in America through translation? Montale has an essay on Levi in *Auto da Fé*, his own selection of his essays. Why not, in fact, much more from *Auto da Fé*? But I suppose I'm really asking for a second volume.

The translation itself is sometimes very good, sometimes less so. Galassi is at his best with the vivid, witty vignettes of personalities that Montale regularly turned out: the poet meeting Italo Svevo for the first time, or edging around André Malraux, or on the track of Stravinsky in Venice, or saying goodbye to Auden in Milan, or being insulted by the aged satyr Brancusi in his filthy Paris studio—the book is worth its price for such brilliant passages.

Staunch anti-Fascist that he was, Montale never troubled his readers with the kind of political obstacles that Pound and Eliot put up. Yet his postwar association with the centrist *Corriere della Sera* and his insistent neutralism damaged him in the 1960s and 1970s, when his late work was attacked as too disengaged. But however withdrawn he became politically, he never stopped insisting on art's necessary involvement with the world. He struggled to remain open-minded about experimental writers, even those he felt were "dismantlers of the spirit and language of a great literature." Reading *The Second Life of Art*, we see that what worried him most was modern formlessness. For Montale, as for Dante, art is a gift, and only a sustaining form can insure for the recipient its essential "second life," that crucial moment when we receive it fully into our own experience. "Only in that instant does the circle of understanding close, and art becomes one with life." The essays gathered here offer an absorbing view of the intelligence that moved behind his art. □

The Creation of Race

IRA BERLIN

THE HIGHEST STAGE OF WHITE SUPREMACY: The Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South. *By John W. Cell. Cambridge University Press. 320 pp. $34.50. Paper $8.95.*

The thorny concepts of class and race have created a brier patch at the center of contemporary social thought—a brier patch of which John W. Cell has no fear. Like a scholarly Br'er Rabbit, he makes his way deftly through the tangled underbrush, tracing the origins of two of the most important concerns of our time, racial segregation in the American South and apartheid in South Africa. In the process, he also helps to unravel the relationship between race and class in modern society. Needless to say, this is an important book.

Cell, a specialist in neither Southern nor South African history, proceeds in an unorthodox but effective manner. Eschewing archival research, he surveys the existing literature, critically evaluating the work of C. Vann Woodward and his critics in the United States, and a host of Marxist scholars and their critics in South Africa. While for the most part he sides with Woodward and the Marxists, he does so selectively, adding his own insights and those of other scholars.

Fundamental to his approach is the notion that race is not a thing, an object or a structure, and that the finest physiological and sociological distinctions have little value in advancing our understanding of its origins. As Cell forthrightly states, the study of race relations has "nothing to do with physical anthropology." Instead, race is—and here Cell leans heavily on E. P. Thompson's definition of class—a relationship that *happens* to men and women as a result of common experiences which create an identity of interests among themselves and against others, whose interests are different and usually opposed to theirs. In short, race has to be created. In South Africa and the American South, "it was made to happen."

Like Woodward and the South African Marxists, Cell sees the creation of segregation as an "essentially new" development, distinct from earlier forms of racial domination. Southern and South African slavery subordinated blacks to whites, but did so within the framework of a "vertical" or paternalistic relationship that was generally face-to-face, if not more intimate. Under segregation, racial relationships became "horizontal" or competitive, and oppressed and oppressor scarcely knew each other. Unlike slavery, segre-

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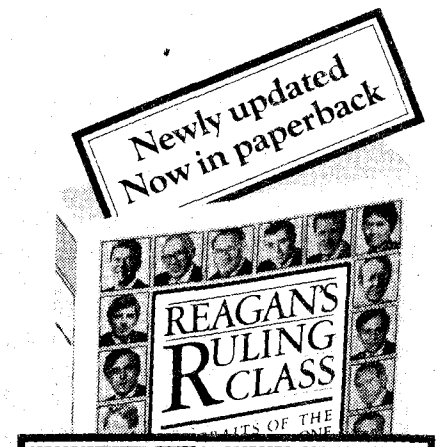

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gation was more at home in the city than in the countryside. Thus, while Cell grants it has a connection to long-established traditions of white supremacy, he sees segregation as a distinct development that drove racism, in his paraphrase of Lenin, to its highest stage.

At the center of Cell's understanding of the making of segregation is a question: *Who* made it? Like a good historical detective, Cell rounds up the usual suspects and reviews their dossiers, finding many with motives, since belief in white supremacy was endemic to people of European origin. But before long he lights upon the culprits: the new industrialists, who had only recently taken power and whose hold on political authority was weak and under siege. Cell may well be documenting the obvious here, but he is also countering an old and still-powerful argument that lays the blame for segregation on the wool-hatted rednecks of the American South and the trekking Boers of South Africa.

In both places, segregation was an aspect of the larger transformation to industrial capitalism. In South Africa, the new system took shape in the first decades of the twentieth century, simultaneously with the founding of the state and the reorganization of its economy around the exploitation of that nation's vast mineral wealth. It crystallized following strikes by black miners in 1920 and Afrikaner miners in 1922. In addition to securing their own rule, mine owners had to find some way of extracting gold from ore that no extant technology could—or can—refine profitably under competitive labor rates. The new racial order solved both the economic and the political problems. First, by splitting the labor market, the new order created an "exploitation color bar," which assured a supply of cheap and ready laborers, especially when combined with Native Land Acts which disinherited the indigenous African peasantry. Second, by elevating white laborers above black ones, it assured white loyalty to the state and confirmed the hegemony of the new ruling class.

The rise of a new class was also at the heart of the creation of segregation in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century. Modern capitalism pitted a new class of urban industrialists against the old planters, and both against insurgent populist farmers, black and white. As in South Africa, segregation assured employers a continuing supply of cheap labor and reaffirmed the racially privileged place of white workers, but its larger purpose was to cement the rule of those at the top.

In both South Africa and the American South, the reformulation of race relations was a political act related to the process of class formation, and not an irrational legacy of Afrikaner nationalism or Southern racism. The university-educated, urban professionals who founded the new system in each nation were no Yahoos. They considered themselves racial moderates, and carefully distinguished themselves from extremists who advocated the outright extermination of blacks. The founders of segregation in America liked nothing better than to celebrate themselves as the "Negro's best friend" and as the discoverers of the only humane solution to the problem of cultural diversity in a pluralistic society.

At its beginnings, segregation exhibited none of the brittle, high-pitched extremism of the Vardamans or Verwoerds; it was a subtle, flexible and sophisticated ideology which encouraged the cooperation of blacks and liberal-minded whites in the cause of "good" race relations. "Time and time again," Cell correctly observes, "segregation was demystified. Time and time again the ideology rebounded, continuing to cloud realities, contriving to turn natural opponents into effective, convinced supporters." Some of segregation's friends acted out of fear and desperation because they knew that segregation was not the harshest solution to the "Negro problem" that whites were capable of implementing. But most segregationists developed a symbiotic relationship with the extremists, citing—perhaps even encouraging—extremist rhetoric and actions to certify their own moderation.

There are several important corollaries to Cell's synthesis. At a time when more and more historians are giving the poor and the powerless center stage, his work is a timely reminder that the ruling class is crucial in determining a society's fundamental relationships. Cell's argument also has important implications for supporters of racial equality. For if the creation of segregation was intimately related to the process of class formation in the American South and South Africa, its demise, or hoped-for-demise, presumably bears those same connections. Although

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Cell does not make this point directly, it will doubtless become part of the debate.

Cell's work is not without its problems, however. In arguing for the novelty of segregation, he sometimes wrongly claims for it characteristics common to all forms of racial domination. For example, slavery—the counterpoint to segregation throughout the book—is made to appear to rest only on brute force. While force was, of course, indispensable, everything now known about slavery in America and Africa demonstrates that it stood upon an ideology every bit as subtle, complex and capable of mystifying the real basis of social relations as segregation. For slaveholders, as for every ruling class, power came out of the barrel of a gun only as a last resort.

Moreover, in smashing what Marc Bloch called the "idol of origins"—the compulsion to trace a historical phenomenon back to its first case—Cell often dispatches legitimate forebears of segregation along with the pretenders. Some of these true ancestors—the intricate laws restricting urban slaves and free blacks in the American South, for example—are lost in definitional squabbles; others are dismissed because of the boundaries of Cell's discussion. An examination of the American North, for instance, would have provided an interesting angle on the origins of segregation in the South.

Sometimes, too, even Br'er Rabbit gets lost in the brier patch. Cell holds that black-belt planters, not urban industrialists, led the way in the disenfranchisement of blacks in the American South. This interpretation of events does not square with the main thrust of the book, and his attempt to make the connection produces an unconvincing, jerry-built argument.

Nonetheless, no scholar has made more sense of the conflicting interpretations of the origins of segregation. If not the final word, Cell's review of the literature and his shrewd original observations make *The Highest Stage* the starting point for any discussion of the transformation of American and South African race relations at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. And because he treats both race and class as relationships that develop over time, he not only clarifies and enlarges our understanding of segregation but also makes an important theoretical contribution to the study of society. □

Burmese Days

NANCY FORBES

THE COFFIN TREE. *By Wendy Law-Yone. Alfred A. Knopf. 195 pp. $12.95.*

One afternoon in Chicago, as the unnamed narrator of Wendy Law-Yone's *The Coffin Tree* is walking with her half brother, Shan, they pass an industrial trash can with a sign on it that reads: "PLACE ON AN EVEN SURFACE. DO NOT PLAY IN AND AROUND TRASH CAN."

> "What's the matter?" I asked, as he stood poring over the sign.
>
> "It's really instructions for two guys," he said. "I mean, the guy who places the trash can on an even surface isn't the same guy who's going to be playing in it."

As she has long suspected, Shan is going crazy.

When she was a child in Burma, Shan had been her mentor and only playmate in their sheltered, upper-class household:

> He taught me to swim, climb trees, build a fire, and shoot a catapult. He taught me to roll birdshot pellets out of river mud, to scale fish freshly caught from the lake and to eat watermelon rind. . . . Without him, the world might have remained only as large as the compound in which I lived; a house bordered by hedges clipped in the shape of regimental birds just high enough to conceal the concertina coils of barbed wire.

A political coup forced brother and sister to flee to the United States, and for most of the past four years, the narrator (now in her 20s) has been living in another insular world, this one bounded by Shan's growing paranoia, her own defensiveness and the bombardments of culture shock. When Shan dies, soon after the trash can incident, she lapses into complete psychic isolation:

> No matter how much I had hated it at the time, being a nursemaid had given me purpose. Now, with Shan gone, there was nothing left to devote myself to, no pressing tasks to hide behind. My workaday life coasted on its own momentum, like one of those miniature cars that can move along without mechanism on a track that is canted and banked in the proper way. I had only to set myself in position to be carried along through the cycle of each day.

News reaches her that her father, a rebel leader, has died in Burma, and her grief, which shows itself by its absence, culminates in obsessive plans to commit suicide.

We next see the narrator in a mental institution. Among the brilliantly eccentric inmates, memories of her childhood revive, and she begins to admit the pain of early attachments and losses. The narrator trains her intelligence on herself for the first time, striving toward a balanced, grown-up version of her mythologized childhood, and arriving, finally, at a larger view of her menacing father and erratic brother. When she begins to understand the people she previously saw only as disappointing her, she gains an impetus for living; not through unconditional forgiveness but through sympathy.

This is Law-Yone's first novel, and so it's not surprising that it reads like autobiography. But her imagination permeates the book, giving immediate pleasures with every sentence, every new character, every new turn of thought. The caricatures of family members are often too intense to be comic, but sometimes they manage a certain grim humor: a grandmother who calls the narrator "little mother killer" and who stands in the hallway while she is dying to pee on the floor in rage; an uncle who spends his life lying on a couch, smoking cheroots and lazily picking at his skin, the heaps of fallen scales prompting the servants to call him "old snakeskin"; two maiden aunts who remain girlish and titteringly ignorant even as their teeth fall out.

More complex and touching are the narrator's evocations of her dead mother, delicate and elusive as a ferret, who visits her in dreams and whom she knows only from cheap, posed photographs; of her father, strong, absent and cruel, habitually biting his tongue in anger on his few visits home; of the vulnerable, imaginative and tragic Shan. All these people shimmer in the high relief of a child's perception. Although they all abandon her, through self-preoccupation, madness or death—even the way her father ships her off to the United States and safety feels like rejection—the narrator's bitterness does not disturb the purity of the

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light in which she recalls her past.

Later, in the United States, she reports the briefest encounters with the same immediacy of impression. Thinking about how she and Shan must have appeared to an American couple they once visited when they lived in New York City, the narrator says:

> Years later, I came across a cartoon that reminded me of our bumbling stabs at presentability. It showed a cloddish-looking fellow in a folksy costume and a belled cap, holding a tambourine and saying, "And now I will sing you a song of my country."
>
> So must we have seemed when we arrived at the Morrison's Park Avenue address: Shan in his shiny suit that drooped at the shoulders, I in my lime green dress with shoes to match—a pair of bumpkins singing a song of our country.

The Coffin Tree is, finally, Law-Yone's song of her country, stubbornly honest and compelling. There are flaws—the book is too choppy, the narrator is too indistinct for too long, and some of the circumstances of the story (Shan's death, for instance) remain perhaps unintentionally mysterious. But none of these problems compromise what is special about this novel: its way of seeming to be on familiar terms with all experience, no matter how bizarre. Law-Yone writes with a cool sense of incongruity, whether she's describing Burma or the United States. It is one of her many gifts, which, taken together, promise much for the future. □

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THEATER.

RICHARD GILMAN

The Dining Room
The Middle Ages

A. R. Gurney Jr. has a wonderful name for the kind of work he does, an unmistakably American name from its initials to its "Jr." What Gurney does is write the most thoroughly American and middlebrow plays of any of our dramatists; if "middlebrow" is too strong a word, I'll call him the poet laureate of middle-consciousness.

I use that term to indicate both that his plays fall in the center of the technical and thematic spectrums of American drama and that they never rise much above a modest level of wit and perceptiveness, or ever fall much below it. Moreover, in a theater increasingly dominated by writers from minority religious and ethnic backgrounds, Gurney speaks for, or to, or with the voice of what is still our largest population bloc. Gurney is a WASP—he has rather excessively been called the John Cheever of the theater—who celebrates the cultural and moral virtues of his heritage (specifically in its Eastern, more or less educated and more or less upper-class aspects), mourns their decline and pokes fun at their present perversions.

He doesn't do any of these things with notable force or invention, true, but neither is he often flaccid or wholly derivative. His plays are usually about ordinary people to whom nothing extreme or spectacular happens; structurally, they combine traditional naturalism with some mildly avant-garde (or, more accurately, erstwhile avant-garde) techniques.

None of the plays I've seen is Aristotelian: most of them range back and forth in time, over periods as long as forty years, and some have multiple settings. Gurney is given to scenes flowing into one another or overlapping, and to such other somewhat shopworn expressionist techniques as naming characters "the girl," "the father," "the policeman" and so on. His most interesting play using these methods, or anyway his most diverting idea for a play, is *Who Killed Richard Cory?*, which starts with Edwin Arlington Robinson's famous poem and spins a psychic and sociological drama from its lines.

The Dining Room has been playing in New York City for some time at the Astor Place Theater; *The Middle Ages* opened here recently at the Theater at Saint Peter's Church, after several regional productions. Between them, the plays display most of Gurney's methods and concerns. They wander around in time—*The Middle Ages* begins in the mid-1940s and ends in the late 1970s—their scenes are connected not by narrative progression but by a ruling idea, and they deal with aspects of WASP life.

The notion behind *The Dining Room* is that WASPs are fading out as a distinctive cultural grouping, and that this is both amusing and saddening. On the single set—an old-fashioned dining room with stiff-backed chairs, a sideboard and a long, highly polished table—a cast of six enacts vignettes of ethnic decline and nostalgia. The room itself is supposed to function as a metaphor for upper-bourgeois life: The dining room was once the center of proper domestic existence, but how many families use it now? In an early scene an architect tells a young couple who've bought the house that they ought to convert the room to some other use.

"It's like a tomb," someone says in a later scene. In one of the more successful sketches, an anthropology student asks his aunt to show him her dining room "things"—fingerbowls, Waterford crystal, bone china—because he's studying "the eating habits of a vanishing culture." Other scenes look affectionately on a way of life that is passing: an old man describes how much he missed the dining room during a European tour; sitting comfortably in his usual place at the head of the table, a father dictates his funeral plans to his son.

But too often the room wobbles out of its metaphorical or symbolic status, as in a scene where a son learns that his mother is having an affair, a discovery that could as easily have been made in another room. And too often what Gurney gives us is obvious or sentimental; even at his best, when he's "touching," it's the lightest of strokes.

The Middle Ages takes place in the "trophy room" of a men's club in an unnamed Eastern city. A fable about love and propriety, or the lack thereof, among you-know-who, its chief dramatic elements are the protracted pursuit of his sister-in-law by the black sheep scion of a leading family and the scion's conflict with his father.

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Along the way, Gurney has some sociological fun at the expense of aristocratic foibles and prejudices—among the son's antics that shock the father is his inviting some black friends to use the club's pool. But the play, while never inept and seldom boring, hasn't much energy and offers no surprises. It's right in the middle.

Even so, it's better than can be seen in the present production. David Trainer, who seems to be Gurney's personal director, has staged *The Middle Ages* without flair or expressive movement. None of the four actors is distinctive and one, Andre Gregory (who plays the father), is shockingly ill equipped. Trainer does a better job with *The Dining Room*, where the six performers move in and out of their multiple roles with competence and, on occasion, verve. □

FILMS.

ROBERT HATCH

Tender Mercies
Kamikaze '89

Bruce Beresford's *The Getting of Wisdom*, *Don's Party* and, most notably, *Breaker Morant* were instrumental in bringing Australian moviemaking to world attention. Now he has come north to Hollywood and made *Tender Mercies*.

Beresford is the least predictable of directors. *The Getting of Wisdom* is a nostalgic evocation of a girl's coming of age; *Don's Party* is a sardonic social comedy; the hard-eyed *Breaker Morant* deals with the ambiguities of honor and justice. *Tender Mercies* is a gently contemplative idyll about love and the fragility of happiness. The unifying element in his work is the conviction he brings to each of his disparate themes—that and the deeply etched characterizations he evokes from his actors.

He develops the new picture (the script is by Harton Foote) around the commanding presence of Robert Duvall, here playing Mac Sledge, a celebrated country singer who has drowned his career in alcohol. When Mac wakes up one morning in a shanty-built motel and gas station somewhere on the highway north of Dallas, he has hit bottom. He is broke, but Rosa Lee (Tess Harper), the owner of the place, a Vietnam War widow with a young son, lets him work off what he owes her by cleaning up the

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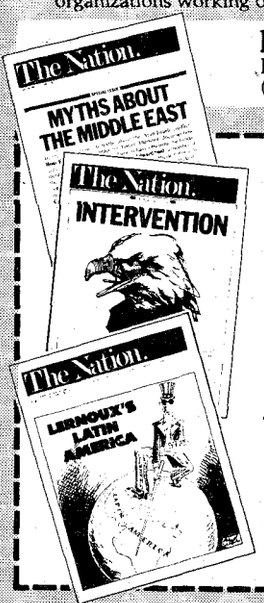

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grounds. That done, Mac asks if he may stay on. She agrees, provided that he stay sober; two months later, since he has managed to do so, she agrees to marry him.

Mac Sledge is a complex, soft-spoken man with an edgy temper; Rosa Lee is a self-reliant young woman who takes good care of her boy and sings enthusiastically in the choir of a fundamentalist church. According to prevailing expectations, theirs is a union slated for disaster, but such is not Beresford's intention. Bent on celebrating the recuperative power of the human spirit, he leads his hero into temptation but delivers him from evil, and the audience I was in seemed dazed by the euphoria of witnessing a miracle.

Coming from a raw country of enormous, empty landscapes, Beresford responds to the loneliness of small-town life on our Western plains. He feels the magnetic pull of the Interstate highways, appreciates the kitchen gardens of the bleak roadside oases, records with respect the fervor of revivalist religion, catches the ambivalence of contemporary folk music, in which yearning lyrics are sung against a driving, electronic blare of sound.

The picture takes note as well of wrecked marriages and arbitrary deaths. Mac, who reaches for meanings that elude him, demands to be told why he has survived when others have not. There is no satisfying answer to that, and good luck is an idea hard to swallow in our hapless times. Beresford invokes it with no embarrassment or apology, eliciting from the cast a gusto that makes you, however briefly, believe in mercy.

Now comes the flip side of that disc. Rainer Werner Fassbinder was an actor before he became a director, and he often appeared in his own films—sometimes briefly and anonymously, but to memorable, often savage, effect. In *Kamikaze '89*, made only months before he killed himself, he is the star, one might even say the subject, of the picture. It was directed by Wolf Gremm, from Per Wahloo's novel, *Murder on the 31st Floor*, but it is stamped with Fassbinder's witty revulsion against his world.

The movie is set in the very near future, and life in its West German metropolis, though grotesquely sterile, is not strange enough for our comfort. Germany has become the richest of all nations, having rid itself of every problem known to advanced capitalism by entrusting all the means of communication and control to a single corporation, a vast complex which answers no questions and is responsible to no one. Intellectuals have been sequestered, political opinion is subversive per se, the single TV channel is preoccupied for days on end with a marathon laughing contest. The weather is invariably said to be fair. There is nothing strikingly new about this threat of anti-utopia; it is Orwell's 1984 postponed five years.

Nor is the plot particularly engaging. The corporation has received a bomb threat, and police Lieutenant Jansen (Fassbinder) is instructed to deal with it. For four days, he pursues leads that melt before him like mist in the sun. But if the scene is familiar and the plot more than a little baffling, Fassbinder's performance is luminous and exhilarating.

In a world of pin-stripes and uniforms, he is dressed in a disreputable suit of imitation leopard skin, which hangs on him like sacking. This costume, Jansen's gesture of defiance, also brilliantly befits Fassbinder, who looks like a fat, slit-eyed, weary but lethally agile cat. He speaks little, but every gesture, every turn of his hulking body, every jaunty step and droop of shoulder expresses Jansen's purpose—which is to solve a mystery that from the start he suspects has been foisted upon him. Fassbinder's suicide seemed at the time a terrible waste of talent; now, watching this demonstration of his profound wisdom as an actor, I was downcast again. When the film ends, he is leaning, exhausted, against a wall of his office, listening to the recorded voice of Richard Nixon congratulating Neil Armstrong on having taken that giant step for mankind on a new road to universal peace. Looking at him, while that fatuous complacency drips from the tape, one has a chilling insight as to where Fassbinder thought that road would lead. □

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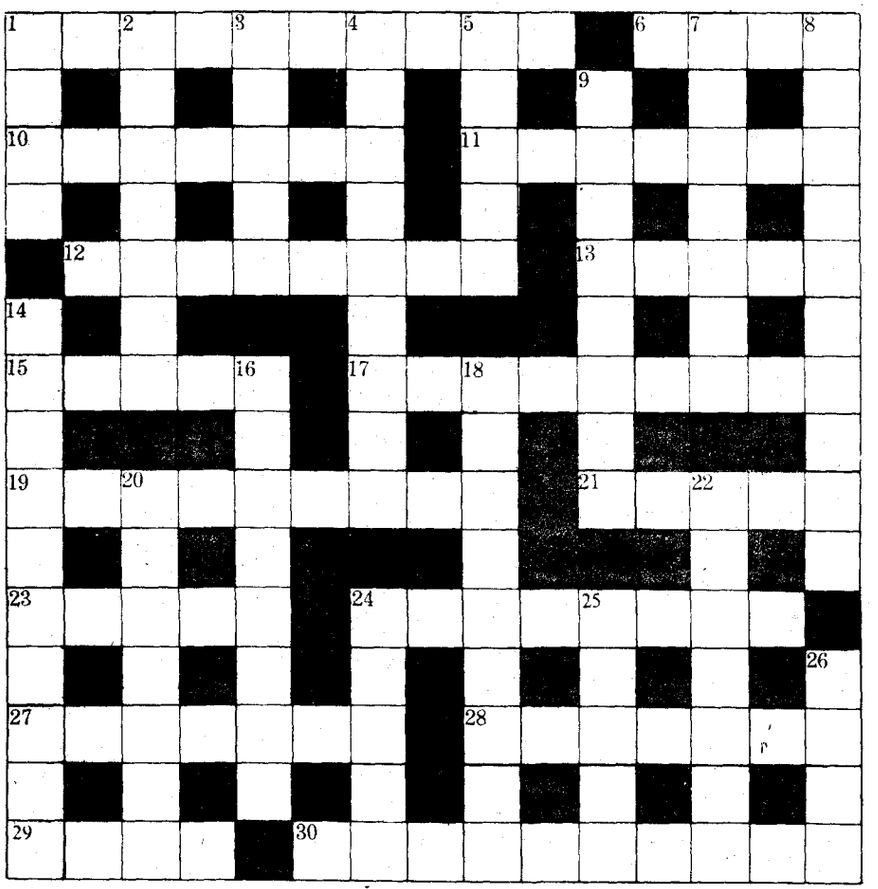

ACROSS

1 and 6 How some military dictatorships exist, by and large. (2,1,7,4)
6 See 1
10 Using shellac, query the contents—this is something like it. (7)
11 Perhaps draws on this as a way to go upwards as well, commonly. (7)
12 See 1 down
13 You might not believe in such, but wise men can easily reach one hundred. (5)
15 Stravinski's were vernal. (5)
17 Sort of what a lion has around the thorax—something like a band. (9)
19 A lot of his was reputedly unhappy on the stage. (9)
21 It's a wrong/right way to get to the top . . . (5)
23 . . . or bottom. (5)
24 See 1 down
27 Some people get clipped when they pay for one. (7)
28 Want things to be done? Take the sign for silver and this—they're tacked on. (7)
29 The "before" of Alger's riches. (4)
30 The business might have it despite a round-the-clock operation. (6,4)

DOWN

1, 12 and 24 across Is it the cry of the watchman that makes the wildcat operation peter out? (4,4,4,4,4)
2 Is there a point in the battered tin can being old? (7)
3 Some of Orwell's animals were more so. (5)
4 Sort of throw a wild mare around, and you might see one crawl. (9)
5 Almost like a fight that's arranged. (5)
7 Honest, it still wouldn't be a grand example! (7)
8 Search, I say, is wrong—but they wouldn't be hard to find! (4,6)
9 Their crawl is not like that of 4. (8)
14 You have to do this before you can weigh it. (4,6)
16 How they fire a whole lot of people is perhaps only part of the picnic. (4,4)
18 Incas and a variety of much later people. (9)
20 Stevenson's was just for the night—not like that of The Man Who Came to Dinner. (7)
22 Where you might find the small businessman during the day, if he has just 30. (2,5)
24 Praise in part the next old hero. (5)
25 Married? It's about time—but you probably didn't get in *too* deep if you did. (5)
26 If a little wet, one might fire. (4)

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